

IELTS SUCCESS FORMULA

GENERAL



**THE COMPLETE PRACTICAL GUIDE
TO A TOP IELTS SCORE**

Based on research into test takers and extensive IELTS experience

STEPHEN SLATER & SIMONE BRAVERMAN

Centre for English Language in the University of South Australia

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INTRODUCTION

A big 'HELLO' to you from your team of authors, Stephen and Simone. We are glad you have chosen IELTS SUCCESS FORMULA for your exam preparation. They say everything happens for a reason, and perhaps **the reason you're reading this book is that you need a high IELTS score and you want to be confident about how to achieve it for yourself or how to help your students to achieve an above-average IELTS score.**

Many books have been written about IELTS preparation. What makes this one different? As you will have noticed, this book is called "IELTS Success Formula". That's exactly what you should expect to find here – **step by step, friendly guidance on how to overcome your difficulties and achieve a high score in the IELTS test.** This book wastes no time and immediately shows you the important aspects requiring attention during your exam preparation. The tips, advice and examples here will help you understand the difference between a lower score response and a higher score response, and you will learn efficient ways of dealing with test tasks to give more accurate answers, faster.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book was designed to suit busy test takers as well as people who can devote several weeks to IELTS preparation. Here are two possible test preparation plans:

PLAN A: CRASH-COURSE PREPARATION (for candidates who are short of time)

STEP 1. Read through the Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking lessons while making notes. Pay special attention to secrets and tips on impressing your assessor and achieving a higher score.

STEP 2. Do the full practice test included in this book. Instead of sticking strictly to IELTS time limits, spend some additional minutes trying to implement all the useful tips you have learned in this book.

STEP 3. Analyse your performance: write a brief summary on what you were good at, not so good at, and what to improve. Check your answers against the correct ones in the book and try to understand why you were wrong and why the answers in the book are correct. Then go over our tips once more on the skills you need to improve.

STEP 4. With any time left before your exam, locate and work through the relevant Fitness Activities to improve your performance in the skills that you found difficult in the practice test. IELTS Writing Doctor can help you cover the gaps in your use of grammar and vocabulary, and the rated writing samples and the recorded IELTS-style interview give you insights into how **you** can get a higher score in writing and speaking.

PLAN B: COMPREHENSIVE PREPARATION (for candidates who have more time, or for teachers/students working with our book on IELTS preparation courses)

STEP 1. Work systematically through the lesson for each IELTS subtest with its detailed descriptions, extensive Q/A, and secrets of impressing an assessor and raising your score.

As you read through each lesson chapter carefully, note any information, strategies, tips or advice that are new to you. Underline or highlight the ones that apply to you.

STEP 2. After finishing the lesson for every skill (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking), work through its fitness activities and then check your answers.

Analyse any incorrect answers, and try to understand why you were wrong, and why the answer in the book is correct. UNDERSTANDING tasks and mistakes is central to improvement.

Note: if you need some help with your use of grammar or ideas for vocabulary, visit our IELTS Writing Doctor and Top Score Vocabulary in the Writing and Speaking chapters. For a deeper understanding of how to improve your score in writing or speaking, check out the rated writing samples and the recorded IELTS-style interview with a detailed analysis of the speaker's performance.

STEP 3. Take the Full practice test.

You should work through the test under strict test conditions and in the correct order (L > R > W > S) observing correct timings for each subtest. Put into practice as many relevant techniques and insights as possible from each of the four skills chapters you have systematically worked through.

When you have completed the full test, you can check your answers. For the Writing and Speaking test you'll need either to self assess by rating your level in comparison with those in our Writing and Speaking Resource sections, or ask a teacher to give you a rating.

STEP 4. Analyse your test performance and re-test later.

A vital, final stage in our SUCCESS FORMULA is to analyse and evaluate your exit test performance carefully in each of the four subtests and to write brief notes on what you were good at, not so good at, and what to improve. **UNDERSTANDING your performance deeply IS MUCH BETTER THAN JUST DOING** one, new test after another.

After a week, **re-take the exit test, and carefully re-analyse your performance.**

You will by then have applied the IELTS SUCCESS FORMULA! Good luck!

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IELTS LISTENING

WHAT'S INSIDE:

❖ Listening Lesson

- First questions answered
- What if I...? Some problem situations
- 8 'must do' things for success in the Listening Test
- How to avoid problems with your answers
- Famously misspelled words list

❖ Listening Fitness Activities 1-10

LISTENING LESSON

First Questions Answered

Q. How long is the Listening test?

A. The Listening test takes 40 minutes, where the first 30 minutes are used to listen to a recording and answer questions on what you hear, and the last 10 minutes are used to transfer your answers from the question booklet to the Answer sheet.

Q. Is the Listening test different for Academic and General Training test takers?

A. No, there is no difference in the format or contents of the Listening test in Academic and General Training tests.

Q. How is the Listening test organized?

A. The recording consists of four sections, which progress in speed and difficulty. Sections 1 and 3 are recordings of conversations between two or more people, and Sections 2 and 4 are recordings of monologues.

Q. How many questions are there?

A. There are 40 questions in total in the Listening test. In each section there are 10 questions.

Q. What topics are likely to appear in the Listening test?

A. Every section will have a different topic.

Section 1 is an everyday conversation between two people, such as a patient and a doctor, a receptionist and a client, and so on.



Section 2 is a lecture, a presentation or a speech by a person on an everyday topic such as services and facilities available in a library.




Section 3 is a conversation that may include more than two people about study-related matters. Often the participants are a student and a lecturer or a group of students, discussing homework or a university project.



Section 4 is a talk or a lecture on an academic subject, such as historical summary or a presentation of a study the speaker has undertaken.

Q. What type of questions am I likely to get?

A. All the questions will be about the information on the recording; however, the way you need to provide your answers (or, as we call it, 'task type') may differ. The typical task types are below (Figure 1.)

Task type	Example
<p>MATCHING – select the appropriate description (verbal or a picture).</p>	<p>Questions 1–3</p> <p>Who will pay for the following items:</p> <p>A Mary B Peter C Both Mary and Peter</p> <p>Write the correct letter (A–C) next to questions 1–3.</p> <p>1 food for the trip _____ 2 accommodation _____ 3 excursions _____</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 1 (Page 21)</i></p>
<p>MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS – select the correct answer.</p>	<p>Question 4</p> <p>Circle the correct letter A–C.</p> <p>The reason Mary prefers to stay in this hotel is</p> <p>A because of the magnificent view B because of the facilities C because of the affordable pricing</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 2 (Page 22)</i></p>

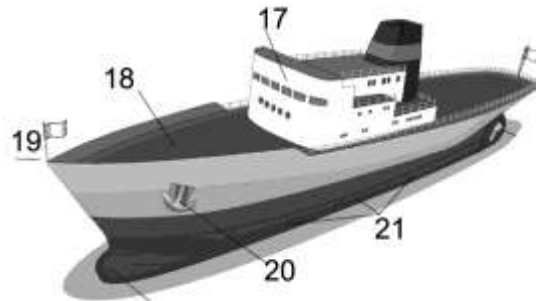
Task type	Example
<p>SENTENCE COMPLETION — complete a sentence according to what you hear.</p>	<p>Question 5</p> <p>Complete the sentence below. Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER for each answer.</p> <p>Peter has put a _____ on his packing list.</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 3 (Page 23)</i></p>
<p>SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS — write an answer in one, two or three words, according to the instructions, on what you hear.</p>	<p>Question 6</p> <p>Answer the question below. Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER for your answer.</p> <p>Which country are both Mary and Peter reluctant to visit? _____</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 4 (Page 24)</i></p>
<p>FORM OR NOTE COMPLETION — enter the appropriate information in blanks.</p>	<p>Questions 7–10</p> <p>Complete the travel agency form below, using NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER for each answer.</p> <p>Customer's name 7 _____</p> <p>Booking includes 8 ___ adults, 9 ___ children</p> <p>Dates of holiday: 21 April to 10 _____</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activities 5–7 (Pages 25–26)</i></p>

Task type	Example												
<p>TABLE/FLOW CHART COMPLETION – fill in the blank cells or blocks.</p>	<p>Questions 11–13</p> <p>Complete the table below. Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER for each answer.</p> <p>Trip Itinerary</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Flight no.</th> <th>Destination</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>21 April</td> <td>CX 1345</td> <td>11 _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 April</td> <td>12 _____</td> <td>Toronto, Canada</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13 _____</td> <td>FL 131</td> <td>New York, USA</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 8 (Page 27)</i></p>	Date	Flight no.	Destination	21 April	CX 1345	11 _____	25 April	12 _____	Toronto, Canada	13 _____	FL 131	New York, USA
Date	Flight no.	Destination											
21 April	CX 1345	11 _____											
25 April	12 _____	Toronto, Canada											
13 _____	FL 131	New York, USA											
<p>SUMMARY COMPLETION – fill missing words in the blanks. You may or may not be given a list of words to choose from. If there is no list, choose directly from what you hear on the recording.</p>	<p>Questions 14–16</p> <p>Complete the summary below. Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER for each answer.</p> <p>Peter and Mary are planning a 14 _____ together. The 15 _____ they have decided to visit include Canada and USA, where they will be 16 _____ by plane.</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 9 (Page 28)</i></p>												

DIAGRAM, MAP OR PLAN LABELLING—
write short descriptions of up to three words
for parts of a drawing.

Questions 17–21

Label the diagram below. Write your answers in the boxes 17–21 on the answer sheet.



*Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 10
(Pages 29-30)*

Figure 1.



Note: in the real Listening test you won't see the task type change after every question—it is common to see a group of about five questions for every task type.

Q. Will I have time to read the questions?

A. Yes, you will have about 15–20 seconds to go over each group of questions before listening.

Q. When do I answer?

A. Once a recording is being played you will need to answer the questions as you listen, because you will hear the recording only once.

Q. Where and how do I write the answers?

A. During the listening test write all the answers in the question booklet. Once the recording has stopped you will have 10 more minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet.

Please read the section 'How to Avoid Problems with Your Answers' (Page 14), to make sure none of your answers gets disqualified.

Q. Will I be penalized for writing answers in capital letters?

A. When answering any task with missing words (such as sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, etc) you can write in uppercase letters (e.g. 'AFTERNOON') or lowercase letters (e.g. 'afternoon'), as you wish. It is probably best to choose a particular way (either uppercase or lowercase) and follow it consistently.

Q. Will I need to re-phrase what I hear in my answers?

A. No, you won't. All the answers are as heard on the recording. You will not need to substitute a word for its synonym or to change its form.

Q. What spelling version should I use, British or American?

A. Both British and American spelling versions are accepted. It is also very important that your spelling is correct, because misspelled answers may be penalized. For example, you can write 'color' (American spelling) or 'colour' (British spelling), but if you write 'calor' the answer will get zero points.

Q. Is grammar important?

A. Yes, grammar is an important part of the Listening test. Any grammatically incorrect answers will not get any points, even if their meaning is correct. If you use a singular form ('apple') where a plural form should be used ('apples'), if you use the wrong tense or verb form ('he go' instead of 'he goes'), such ungrammatical answers will receive zero points.

Q. Is it OK to use shorthand writing in the answers?

A. While it is acceptable to use shorthand writing for your notes in the question booklet, your answers on the answer sheet must be complete. So if you quickly scribbled on your answer sheet something like 'doc. ord.', use the full form 'doctor's orders' when transferring such answers to the answer sheet.

What if I...? Some Problem Situations

Q. What if I can't understand what is being said on the recording?

A. If you have trouble understanding the recording it could happen for several reasons:

Reasons

It is possible that the speaker uses an accent you are not familiar with. For example, people who are used to the American accent may find a British accent hard to understand at first. This shouldn't be a problem as long as you have had some time to train your ears by listening to recordings in different accents that may appear in the IELTS test. The main accents to concentrate on include those from Australia, Britain, Canada, America and New Zealand.

It is also possible that your listening skills are weak, which may make you feel that the words are coming faster than you can recognize and understand them.

Solutions

This doesn't mean you will fail in the exam, because with training and regular work your listening can improve significantly. To develop your listening skill:

- It's a good idea to use recordings that have a transcript (to help you understand every word).
- Listen to a recording daily for 20 minutes, then rewind and listen repeatedly to unclear sentences, to build the speed at which you decode spoken input.
- Try repeating words you hear after listening to help you remember them and the way they are pronounced, and perhaps even to improve your pronunciation.

Q. What if I lose track of the recording?

A. Being focused is very important in the Listening test. The fact that the recording is played only once means that there are no second chances for missed answers. This is why it is crucial that you learn mentally how to block out any disturbance or background noise, while preparing and practicing for the exam.

However, anything can happen, and if you have lost track of the recording there is a way to re-gain control:

- Jump ahead to the two or three questions immediately following the one you missed and you will find the one that the recording is addressing now. This way, you may miss an answer or two but from the question where you have re-established the connection with the recording, no more answers will be lost.
- Try to guess the missed answers instead of leaving their boxes blank on the answer sheet.

Q. What if I am a slow reader and don't have enough time to read the questions before the recording begins playing?

A. There is a solution that may help, especially with Sections 2, 3 and 4.

At the end of each section you get about 30 seconds to review your answers. Instead of checking your answers for the previous section, you can read the questions ahead that refer to the next section. Then, when the recording instructs you to move on and read the questions of the next section, you will have some more time to continue reading the questions.

Example

You have just finished answering Section 1. The recording announces that your time to check answers has begun. You begin reading the questions for Section 2. The recording announces that now you can read the questions for Section 2. You are continuing reading the questions for Section 2 and that way are already further ahead.

Is it wise to do so? Due to the nature of the Listening test, once a recording has stopped, many students find it difficult to recall what has been said, and therefore it's not likely that you will remember enough to correct your answers. Also, there will be another time slot of 10 minutes when you will be asked to copy your answers from the booklet to the answer sheet – and while copying you can also check the grammar and spelling.

Q. What if I have a problem with spelling?

A. Spelling is a well-known problem, even for people whose first language is English. However, in the IELTS test spelling is very important and your answers may not be considered correct if they are wrongly spelled. For example, if the correct answer is 'calendar' and you wrote 'calender', even though the meaning is clear the spelling is wrong, and so your answer will get zero points.

To overcome this problem the obvious solution is to learn how to spell, but we know that this may take years. People who have to sit the IELTS test are usually in a hurry and have limited time for preparation—months or even weeks—and therefore we propose a shortcut. Our experience with students over the years has taught us that some words are more likely to get misspelled than others.

Please refer to the 'Famously misspelled words list' at the end of this chapter Page 17. By learning the correct spelling of most of the words on that list you will greatly reduce your chances of misspelling an answer in the IELTS exam.

Q. What if I am unsure of an answer?

A. Even if you are unsure what the correct answer is, having listened to the recording you can take a guess. Instead of leaving the answer blank, write your best guess in its space on the answer sheet. This won't hurt your Listening score and, if you're lucky, may even help it.

Q. What if I have a hearing/eyesight problem?

A. If you have a hearing/eyesight problem that can be backed up by a medical certificate, you should contact the test centre where you intend to take the test well in advance. The test centers consider each case individually and make special arrangements, including amplification of the recording or preparing a lip-reading version of the Listening module, or a Braille version of the question booklet for sight-impaired candidates.

Q. What if I get sick on the day of my exam?

A. It is generally a good idea to postpone your exam if you are not well. This is especially true if the sickness makes you sneeze. When we sneeze our ears are blocked, which is why constant sneezing may cause a person (and other candidates nearby!) to miss the key parts of the recording that hold the answers.

Your local test centre can give you the most up-to-date and detailed advice on how to postpone your exam.

8 'Must do' Things for Success in the Listening Test

1. Heard the answer? Write it down straightaway.

A listening test is a very dynamic experience and, simply put, you need to keep up. It is impossible to retain in your memory an answer that you heard, because it will be washed away by the continuous flow of information as the recorded voices keep on talking. This is why, once you've heard an answer to a question, you need to write it down, right there and then. You may think that writing will distract you from listening (and the truth is that initially it might), but with practice you will learn to write and listen at the same time, and writing won't come at the expense of listening.

2. Only look at one group of questions at a time.

You know by now that Listening test recordings are divided into Sections 1 to 4. But you may not know yet that Sections 1 to 3 are divided into smaller subsections, a fact which makes your job a bit easier.

In those sections the recording will refer to a certain group of questions, *not all* of the questions in the section, and it will say what questions you should look at *now*. For example, the recording may say "Now look at the questions 7 to 10" and then be silent for about 20 seconds. This means that in the recorded segment that then follows four answers will be given — to questions 7, 8, 9 and 10.

So what should you do? Most importantly, read the questions while the recording is silent, but don't read beyond question 10. Underline key words, quickly grasp the main idea of each question and try to understand what sort of answer you will hear — an amount? working hours? a location?

Another excellent consequence of the fact that Listening sections 1–3 are broken down into subsections is that you won't lose a whole section *even if you've missed a couple of answers*. As soon as you hear the recording say "Now look at questions 11 to 13", and you know that you still don't have the answer to question 10, cut your losses — stop looking for the answer to question 10 — and move on to the current group of questions. In this way you still have a chance to answer all the questions in the current group and then, at the end of the section/test you can go back and guess the answer to the 'lost' question.

3. Details *are* important.

Any specific information mentioned on a recording, such as names, phone numbers, dates, opening hours, locations, years, colors is usually mentioned for a reason. It is very likely that such details are contained in the answer. When you hear specific information on a recording, have another look at the current group of questions, to see where it may fit.

4. Multiple choice: not all answer options are born equal.

When dealing with Multiple choice tasks not all answer options have the same likelihood of being correct.

Out of three answer options one can almost always be crossed out as plain wrong or as not mentioned by the speaker, and then you will have fewer options to choose from – which will make your job much easier.

5. Summary completion: let sentence structure be your guide.

When completing a summary it is often hard to guess straightaway which word is missing from the blank space. Sometimes it may seem as though no word is missing at all! A trick that always works for this type of task is to look at the words immediately before and after the gap, because they reveal whether the missing word is a noun, an adjective, or a verb.

For instance, consider the summary below

Example

Peter and Mary are planning a 14 _____ together. The 15 _____ they have decided to visit include Canada and USA, where they will be 16 _____ by plane.

It seems that answer 14 should be a noun (such as 'trip'), 15 – also a noun (such as 'countries'), and 16 should be a verb (such as 'arriving' or 'travelling').

How does this help? Once you know that you're looking for a verb, selecting the right one from what you hear on the recording will be easier. You will pay more attention to verbs than to nouns or adjectives.

6. Plan/Map/Diagram Labeling – try to note down all the locations mentioned.

As soon as the recording begins talking about the map/plan/diagram, start labeling the locations on the drawing in the question booklet. Instead of trying to find and label only the locations required in the questions, note down every location the recording mentions. Why? Because it is easier just to write down information as the recording proceeds than it is to analyse that input at the same time. Later on, when you are given some time to check your answers at the end of that particular Listening section, you can look at your notes and use them to find the right answers and write them in the booklet. Then, at the end of the Listening test you will be given time to copy the correct answers on to the Answer Sheet.

7. Do not let the use of synonyms confuse you.

It may happen that you will hear a word on the recording, but the question will be worded using its synonym. Test takers whose minds are 'locked' on the exact word the speaker said, may get confused and not realize the question is mentioning the same thing.

Example

The recording may say, "The list of prohibited items inside an airplane includes..." and the question may say, "Passengers are not allowed to take the following items on board a plane".

8. The speakers (not just women!) are allowed to change their minds.

One of the things you are being tested on in the Listening test is whether or not you can follow the *development of the conversation*, AND, just like in a real-life conversation, the speakers on a recording can change their minds.

Example

Peter: "We can book a flight on the 10th of April, what do you think?"

Mary: "My vacation request was approved to start from the 9th, so I am free to go. But hang on, isn't your brother's birthday party on the 10th?"

Peter: "You're right, how could I forget?! Thanks for reminding me. We'd better book our flight on the 11th of April, or he'll never forgive me."

You should pay attention to such unexpected changes of mind, and make sure they don't trick you into giving the incorrect answer.

How to Avoid Problems with Your Answers

You would be surprised how many correct answers get disqualified for 'technical' reasons. To make sure this doesn't happen to you read through the common problems below and make a mental note to avoid making these mistakes.

Problem 1 – not following the task instructions.

You may have noticed how every task type has a clear set of instructions (refer to the table in Figure 1). They specify how many words or numbers you can use, and what you need to do—complete a sentence, answer a question, circle a letter, and so on. It is very important that you do *exactly* as the instructions say. If the instructions say “Circle two letters”, do exactly that—don't circle just one or three letters.

Especially important is the word limit, because any answer that consists of more words than the limit allows, will get zero points even if its meaning is correct. If the instructions say, “**WRITE NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**”, you may write one, or two or three words—but never more than three.

Problem 2—transferring information incorrectly.

a) Words

When transferring the answers from the question booklet, only the missing words should be written on the answer sheet.

For instance, consider a task that asks you to complete a sentence using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER**.

Example

The sentence is: “Peter and Mary **are** _____ **to** visit their relatives in Ottawa”

Since the correct answer is ‘not going’, writing the words ‘are not going to’ on the answer sheet will mean receiving zero points for your answer.



Note: the definite and indefinite articles 'a', 'the' count as one word each.

b) Symbols and abbreviations

If you are required to complete a sentence that talks about money such as,

“The deposit Peter has to pay for plane tickets is \$_____”

write *only the amount* on the answer sheet, without the '\$' sign, because it's already written in the question booklet.

In a sentence that talks about time, such as,

“Trading hours of the travel agency are Mon–Fri, _____ **am** to 5 pm.”

write only the time on the answer sheet, without the 'am'. The reason is that 'am' is already written in the booklet and you do not need to repeat it.

c) Numbers

Confusing numbers with digits is a common problem. The word 'digit' means any of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. A number is a combination of digits, or in other words more than one digit may form a number.

Why is this important? Because when instructions ask to 'answer in **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER**', it is a mistake to think that you are only allowed to write one digit in the space provided on the answer sheet. You are allowed to write one number, which can consist of many digits.

Example

Complete the sentence below using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER**.

“The address of Peter's uncle is _____ Main street, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.”

Let's say the correct answer (the missing house number) is '308'. It's a mistake to think that all you're allowed to write just one digit (such as '3'), in fact you are allowed to, and should, write '308'.

d) Letters

When the task instructions ask you to circle a letter, this is exactly what you need to transfer to the answer sheet—the letter, not the full answer. There is a whole set of reasons why you shouldn't copy the full answer:

1. It's not what the instructions say
2. You can make a spelling mistake
3. It takes longer to write two or three words than to write a letter.

Example

Circle the correct letter **A–C**.

The reason Mary prefers to stay in this hotel is

- A** because of the magnificent view
- B** because of the facilities
- C** because of the affordable pricing

Let's say B is the correct answer. While you are listening, circle B in the question booklet. When transferring the answers to the answer sheet, write 'B' in the relevant space—don't copy the words 'because of the facilities'.

Famously Misspelled Words List

Correct	Wrong	Correct	Wrong
A		C	
absence	<i>absense / absance</i>	calendar	<i>calender</i>
acceptable	<i>acceptible</i>	career	<i>carrer</i>
accidentally	<i>accidentaly</i>	careful	<i>carefull</i>
achieve	<i>acheive</i>	category	<i>catagory</i>
acknowledge	<i>aknowledge</i>	certain	<i>certin</i>
accommodation	<i>acomodation</i>	colleague	<i>collegue</i>
across	<i>accross</i>	collectible	<i>collectable</i>
address	<i>adress/ adres</i>	competition	<i>compitition</i>
affordable	<i>affortable</i>	completely	<i>completly</i>
almost	<i>allmost</i>	controversy	<i>contraversy</i>
a lot	<i>alot</i>		
amateur	<i>amature</i>	D	
among	<i>amung</i>	decide	<i>dicide</i>
annually	<i>annually</i>	definitely	<i>definatly</i>
appearance	<i>appearence</i>	description	<i>describition</i>
argument	<i>arguement</i>	develop	<i>develope</i>
		dilemma	<i>dilemna</i>
B		disappear	<i>dissapear</i>
balance	<i>balence</i>	disappoint	<i>disapoint</i>
basically	<i>basicly</i>	discipline	<i>disipline</i>
because	<i>becuase</i>		
before	<i>befor</i>	E	
beginning	<i>begining</i>	embarrass	<i>embarass</i>
believe	<i>beleive</i>	environment	<i>enviroment</i>
benefit	<i>benifit</i>	exceed	<i>excede</i>
breathe	<i>brethe/ breath</i>	exercise	<i>exersize</i>
business	<i>bisness/ bizness</i>	experiment	<i>expiriment</i>

Correct	Wrong	Correct	Wrong
F		L	
familiar	<i>familier</i>	leisure	<i>liesure</i>
finally	<i>finaly</i>	length	<i>lenght</i>
foreign	<i>foriegn</i>	lesson	<i>lessen/leson *</i>
forward	<i>foreward</i>	lose	<i>Loose *</i>
further	<i>futher</i>		
G		M	
government	<i>goverment</i>	marriage	<i>marrige</i>
grateful	<i>greatful</i>	minute	<i>minite</i>
guarantee	<i>garantee</i>	mimic	<i>mimmic</i>
		misspell	<i>mispel</i>
H		N	
happened	<i>happend</i>	necessary	<i>necessery</i>
happiness	<i>happyness</i>	neighbour	<i>neibor</i>
height	<i>haight</i>	noticeable	<i>noticable</i>
hoping	<i>hopeing</i>		
I		O	
ignorance	<i>ignorence</i>	obedient	<i>obidient</i>
imitate	<i>immitate</i>	occasion	<i>occassion</i>
immediately	<i>immediatly</i>	occurrence	<i>occurence</i>
incur	<i>incurr</i>	often	<i>offen/ofen</i>
independent	<i>independant</i>	opportunity	<i>oppurtunity</i>
indispensable	<i>indispensible</i>		
interesting	<i>intresting</i>	P	
interruption	<i>interuption</i>	particularly	<i>particurly</i>
		pastime	<i>pasttime</i>
K		perceive	<i>percieve</i>
knowledge	<i>nowledge/ knolege</i>	persistent	<i>persistant</i>
knives	<i>knifs</i>	possession	<i>posession</i>
		preferred	<i>prefered</i>

Correct	Wrong	Correct	Wrong
R		U	
really	<i>realy</i>	until	<i>untill</i>
receive	<i>recieve</i>	usable	<i>usible</i>
referred	<i>refered</i>	usually	<i>usualy</i>
repetition	<i>repitition</i>		
ridiculous	<i>rediculous</i>		
S		V	
separate	<i>seperate</i>	vehicle	<i>vehical</i>
shelves	<i>shelfes</i>	visible	<i>visable</i>
similar	<i>similer</i>		
sincerely	<i>sinseerly</i>		
speech	<i>speach</i>		
successful	<i>successfull</i>		
surely	<i>surelly</i>		
T		W	
temporary	<i>temperary</i>	weather	<i>whether *</i>
therefore	<i>therefor</i>	weird	<i>wierd</i>
thieves	<i>thiefs</i>	whether	<i>wether *</i>
till	<i>til</i>	which	<i>wich</i>
tomorrow	<i>tommorrow</i>		
truly	<i>truely</i>		
twelfth	<i>twelvth</i>		

* These words have correct spelling but their meanings are different from the intended word. However, they have similar pronunciation and are thus easily confused.



LISTENING FITNESS ACTIVITIES

The fitness activities in this section offer you quick practice at the different task types you may encounter in the IELTS Listening test. It's also a chance to use some of the tips from the Listening chapter earlier in our book.

General guidance

- As these are just for practice and not contained within an IELTS Listening test format, it is a good opportunity to experiment with your task strategies.
- Don't forget to read each of the tasks and the instructions carefully before trying to put in your answers.
- If you can wait, check your answers after completing **all** Fitness Activities.
- Later you could also read the transcripts for each activity (See Page 367) to see where the answers were located in the short extracts you listened to.



The recordings for the Listening Fitness Activities listed below, and all other recorded material in later sections can be downloaded on this webpage:

<http://www.ielts-blog.com/isf-downloads/>

Activities	Audio Time
Fitness Activity 1	1 min 53 sec
Fitness Activity 2	1 min 02 sec
Fitness Activity 3	0 min 59 sec
Fitness Activity 4	1 min 02 sec
Fitness Activity 5	0 min 54 sec
Fitness Activity 6	0 min 47 sec
Fitness Activity 7	1 min 06 sec
Fitness Activity 8	1 min 29 sec
Fitness Activity 9	1 min 10 sec
Fitness Activity 10	1 min 59 sec

TASK TYPE » Matching

In this activity you simply have to match the name of the student with the information that they give about themselves. It is important to read the information in the questions first, before listening, so that you know what to listen out for. This is always a good strategy because it gives your listening real focus.



Listen to Fitness Activity 1

Listen to three students Anna (A), Veronica (V) and Chris (C) introducing themselves. Match each student with their personal information, by writing either **A**, **V** or **C**.

- 1 ____ is Swedish.
- 2 ____ was a member of a university film society.
- 3 ____ is studying English literature.
- 4 ____ wrote for a student publication.
- 5 ____ has already been in the festival organising committee.
- 6 ____ will recommend some changes in a written report.

TASK TYPE » Multiple Choice

The IELTS Listening test generally uses only three choices in its multiple choice questions – A, B, C. This is simpler than the four-option multiple choice.

An excellent strategy **before** listening is to look through each set of A,B,C choices and cross out any that look (from your common sense or knowledge!) unlikely to be correct. This saves time and gives the task more focus when actually listening.

It may also help you to pick up when a speaker says something which is **opposite** to one or other of the answer choices. It doesn't always work, but see if you can cross out unlikely answers now, before listening to the next extract.



Listen to Fitness Activity 2

Listen to this short extract on food trends. Choose **A**, **B** or **C**.

- 1 Mobile meals are:
 - A a form of junk food
 - B Canadian home cooking
 - C foods consumed outside of the home

- 2 The increase in sales of snack foods in three years could be:
 - A 14%
 - B 40%
 - C 4%

- 3 Which of these is a nutritious, portable food?
 - A Muesli bar
 - B Cholesterol bar
 - C Food bar

TASK TYPE » Sentence Completion

This type of task involves writing not only the appropriate word in terms of meaning but also choosing the correct grammatical form. The best strategy is to:

- Read the task instructions to see what the maximum number of words is for each answer.
- Look through each sentence before listening and decide what type of word is required grammatically (e.g. noun? adjective? verb? adverb?).
- Then when you listen and choose your word try to make sure it is spelled correctly.



Listen to Fitness Activity 3

Complete these sentences using **ONE WORD ONLY** from the recording.

- 1 Money for the film festival comes from advertising and charging for _____.
- 2 It is necessary to _____ the films by the beginning of March.
- 3 The deadline for getting sponsors is the _____ of March.
- 4 The end of March is the deadline for program _____.
- 5 During April, posters need to be put together and _____.

TASK TYPE » Short-answer Questions

This type of task is straightforward because it is a conventional Q/A style. In other words, you are listening for the information that actually answers the question.

The best strategy is to read the questions so that you know what you are listening out for and in what order. Remember the maximum number of words you can use for each answer.



Listen to Fitness Activity 4

Write an answer to each question using **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS OR NUMBERS** from the recording.

- 1 What did the invention of the QWERTY typewriter keyboard reduce?

- 2 What negative outcome for typists did the layout of the QWERTY keyboard cause? _____
- 3 On which side are many of the most frequently used typewriter keys?

- 4 What happened to typewriter technology after the QWERTY keyboard was invented? _____

TASK TYPE » Form Completion

This type of task sort of tests your 'orientational awareness'. In simple terms you need to know where you are, or which part of the form to focus on while listening. So, look at the forms carefully before listening so that you know your way around the forms.

- Often the speaker will make a little mistake with an address or number and then correct it, so listen out for this type of little trick.
- When a speaker reads out a name for you to copy down and spells it out, you need to know how each of the alphabet letters is pronounced in English.
- Don't forget to check the task instructions for the maximum number of words/numbers you can use.



Listen to Fitness Activity 5

Listen to the airline passenger and complete the form, using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR NUMBERS**.

Passenger Enquiry Form			
Arrival Flight No. 1	_____	Time of arrival: 2	_____
Item lost: 3	_____	Country of flight connection: 4	_____



Listen to Fitness Activity 6

Listen and complete the address and phone number.

Name: Jenny Lee

Address: 1 _____, Riverside

Phone: 2 _____



Listen to Fitness Activity 7

Listen and complete the information about the ATS Office, using **ONE WORD OR A NUMBER**.

ATS Office Regency Theatre

Opening times: Monday - 1 _____ 10-5pm,
Friday/Saturday 10 - 2 _____ pm.

Website address: 3 www._____.com

TASK TYPE » Table Completion

Again, this type of task requires you to 'know your way around' the table before listening.

A good strategy is to check the headings at the top of each column, and to check the information that is already there so that you can see what type of information is required.

Oh, and don't forget to check the task instructions for the maximum number of words.



Listen to Fitness Activity 8

Complete the table using **ONE WORD ONLY** for each answer.

Student Name	Work Experience Location	Day / Time of Day
Theresa	Uni 1 _____	Friday 2 _____
Manuel	Mainly 3 _____	Friday afternoons
Henry	The 4 _____ Shop	5 _____ afternoons

TASK TYPE » Summary Completion

This task is similar to the sentence completion type (See Fitness Activity 3), but is a little more complex. Sometimes you are given a list of words to choose from for the spaces; sometimes not. If no word list is given use words that you actually hear on the recording.

As with sentence completion you should:

- Read the summary and decide what kind of word is missing grammatically.
- Decide too, what sort of meaning the missing word might have (e.g. is it a positive, negative word, a description, a fact?)
- Check the task instructions for the maximum number of words.

It's worth remembering that summary completion is difficult so it is often used in the later parts of the IELTS Listening test.



Listen to Fitness Activity 9

Listen to this short talk about the Dvorak typewriter keyboard and complete the summary. Use **ONE WORD ONLY** from the talk for each space.

SUMMARY

Although the Dvorak keyboard is superior it has not been **1** _____ for two main reasons: the Depression, and **2** _____. Too many people were too accustomed to the QWERTY keyboard. This has prevented improved keyboard **3** _____ for 70+ years.

TASK TYPE » Diagram Labelling

This type of task is similar to forms and tables in the sense that you need to 'know your way around' the diagram BEFORE listening, then you will be more relaxed when listening.

Look at all the information given and what any labels refer to, so that you know more about the topic and about the type of information you will be listening out for. As usual, check the maximum number of words/numbers in the task instructions.



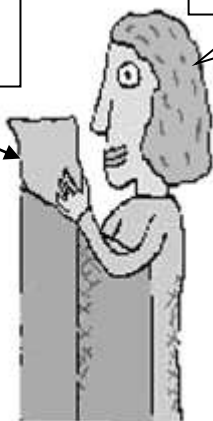
Listen to Fitness Activity 10

Listen and complete the notes in the diagrams. Use **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the recording for each answer.

Before your talk

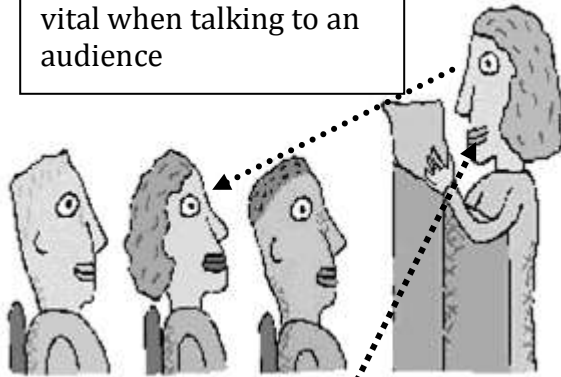
Make **2** _____
on small cards

Choose your topic and
decide **1** _____
you will talk for



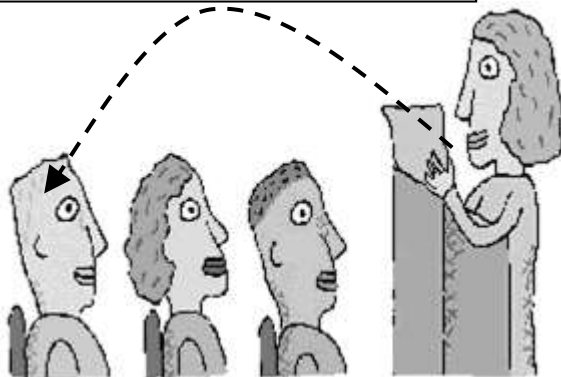
During your talk

3 _____ is vital when talking to an audience



Practise 4 _____ to help pronunciation

5 _____ your voice to reach the person furthest from you



Well done if you completed all the Listening tasks! Tired now? So are we! OK, just one more fitness activity to go! You can do it!

FINAL TASK » Recording Your Answers on the Answer Sheet

Finally we'll give you a little practice at transferring your answers to the correct box on a separate, answer sheet. The answer sheet here is not exactly the same as in IELTS but will certainly help you to become careful about putting your answers in the right box, and more aware of spelling.

Put your answers to all 10 Fitness activities in the Answer Sheet on the next page, in the correct order. You can download a printable Answer Sheet from this webpage:

<http://www.ielts-blog.com/isf-downloads/>

That's the end of our Listening Fitness section, so after transferring your own answers quickly check the correct answers on Page 354, then relax and make yourself some tea or coffee. When comparing the answers try to understand why your wrong answers are incorrect, and why the ones in this book are correct.

It's important to keep relaxed and sleep as well as you can, before the IELTS test, even if you can't stop yourself from being a wee bit nervous. Everyone who takes the test probably feels pretty much the same.

IELTS Success Formula

Practice Answer Sheet (Listening)

Practise transferring your answers from this Fitness section.

TIME LIMIT: 10 minutes

REMEMBER to keep an eye on:

- where you place each answer
- how you spell any words
- the use of abbreviations (only use well-known ones; write in full if in doubt)
- word endings (e.g. don't forget the final 's')
- any answers that you missed out (write your best guess)

Fitness Activity 1	Fitness Activity 6
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	Fitness Activity 7
4.	1.
5.	2.
6.	3.
Fitness Activity 2	Fitness Activity 8
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
Fitness Activity 3	4.
1	5.
2	Fitness Activity 9
3	1.
4	2.
5.	3.
Fitness Activity 4	Fitness Activity 10
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
Fitness Activity 5	5.
1.	Total: 40 answers
2.	
3.	
4.	



IELTS READING

WHAT'S INSIDE:

❖ Reading Lesson

- First questions answered
- What if I...? Some problem situations
- 7 fundamentals to make your Reading Test a success
- Techniques for answering Reading tasks quickly & accurately

❖ Reading Fitness Activities 1-13

READING LESSON

First Questions Answered

Q. What is the General Training Reading test like?

A. During the IELTS Reading test you will be asked to read passages of text, and answer questions on each passage. If you have chosen to do a paper-based test, you will receive a booklet with texts and questions. Alternatively, if you have chosen the computer-based version of the test, you will be reading the texts on a computer screen, and answering questions by selecting the correct answer option with a keyboard/mouse, or by typing your answer.

Q. How long is the Reading test?

A. The Reading test takes 60 minutes. During this time you should finish reading the texts and answering the questions. If you are doing a paper-based test, copy your answers on to the answer sheet **during the same 60 minutes**, because you won't be given extra time to transfer the answers. In the computer-based version you won't need to transfer answers.

Q. How is the Reading test structured in the General Training module?

A. Here is what you can expect to see in a General Training test:

General Training module	
Number of texts	Four to five shorter texts, one longer text (maximum overall length up to 2750 words)
Text type	Four to five factual texts (e.g. collection of advertisements, work-related matters), one explanatory/analytical text
Number of questions	40



Q. How is the Reading test marked?





A. Each of the 40 questions receives one mark if the answer is correct, or zero if the answer is incorrect. The number of marks is then converted to an IELTS score on a nine-band scale.


Q. What kind of questions will I get?


A. All the questions (or, as we call them, 'task types') will be about the information in the texts; however, the way you need to provide your answers can be different. Following the instructions precisely contributes significantly to success in IELTS, which is why getting familiar with each task type **now** is so important. This will help you concentrate on solving the tasks in the real exam, instead of reading each set of instructions for the first time.



The typical task types are below


Task type	Example
<p>MATCHING PARAGRAPH HEADINGS – select the appropriate heading to each paragraph of text.</p> <p> Note: not every heading on the list may be used.</p>	<p>Questions 1–3</p> <p>Choose the correct heading for the Sections A–C above from the list of headings below.</p> <p>Write the correct number (i–iii) in boxes 1–3 on your answer sheet.</p> <p>List of Headings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i Problems in Paradise? ii Benefits outstrip problems iii Development of dams in Australia <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 1 (Page 60)</i></p>




Task type	Example
<p>MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS – select the correct answer from three or four options.</p> <p> Note: sometimes you may be required to select more than one option.</p>	<p>Question 4</p> <p>Using ONLY Section C above, choose the appropriate letter A,B,C, or D.</p> <p>Write your answer in box 4 on your answer sheet.</p> <p>One of the problems of dams is that ...:</p> <p>A new plant species may change the biological balance</p> <p>B they cause more drowning</p> <p>C they lead to changes in salt levels in water further down river</p> <p>D weeds and algae can't survive as easily</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 2 (Page 61)</i></p>
<p>SUMMARY COMPLETION – fill missing words in the blanks.</p> <p> Note: you may or may not be given a list of words to fill in the gaps.</p>	<p>Questions 5–6</p> <p>Complete the summary below based on Sections C and D ONLY, above. Choose NO MORE THAN ONE WORD from the text for each answer.</p> <p>Write your answers in boxes 5–6 on your answer sheet.</p> <p>Dams have benefits and drawbacks. For example, they provide water and 5 _____ but those residing in the dam's path may have to be 6 _____.</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 3 (Page 62)</i></p>




Task type	Example						
<p>DIAGRAM, MAP OR PLAN LABELLING – write short descriptions of up to three words and/or a number for parts of a drawing.</p>	<p>Questions 7–8</p> <p>Look at the diagrams of types of dams (A–D) and read each dam description below.</p> <p>Label each description with the appropriate letter A–D.</p> <p>Write your answers in boxes 7–8 on your answer sheet.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">DAM TYPE</th> <th style="text-align: left;">DESCRIPTION of DAMS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">7 _____</td> <td>Embankment dams use a long-sloped, massive volume of rock, gravel and sand, with the finest materials in the centre to form a waterproof core.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">8 _____</td> <td>Buttress dams have 45 degree walls that transfer the force downwards.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 4 (Page 62)</i></p>	DAM TYPE	DESCRIPTION of DAMS	7 _____	Embankment dams use a long-sloped, massive volume of rock, gravel and sand, with the finest materials in the centre to form a waterproof core.	8 _____	Buttress dams have 45 degree walls that transfer the force downwards.
DAM TYPE	DESCRIPTION of DAMS						
7 _____	Embankment dams use a long-sloped, massive volume of rock, gravel and sand, with the finest materials in the centre to form a waterproof core.						
8 _____	Buttress dams have 45 degree walls that transfer the force downwards.						


Task type	Example
<p>YES/NO/NOT GIVEN (Identifying Writer's Views) – you will be given a list of statements and asked to decide whether each statement agrees with the author's claim or view, contradicts it, or there is no reference to it in the passage.</p>	<p>Questions 9–10</p> <p>Do the following statements reflect the claims of the writer in Section A above?</p> <p>In boxes 9–10 on your answer sheet write</p> <p>YES if the statement reflects the claims of the writer</p> <p>NO if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer</p> <p>NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this</p> <p>9 The deteriorating situation of the lungfish has stimulated public support.</p> <p>10 The habitat of the lungfish is now restricted to primarily only two rivers.</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 5 (Page 65)</i></p>

Task type	Example
<p>MATCHING INFORMATION –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find a paragraph that has the information in the question, or • match statements to certain items from a list, or • categorise features. 	<p>Questions 11–13</p> <p>Which Section (B, C, D or E) above contains the following information?</p> <p>Write the correct letter B–E in boxes 11–13 on your answer sheet.</p> <p>11 Measures for accommodating likely increases in demand for water.</p> <p>12 Data illustrating current and projected water demand in Queensland</p> <p>13 Cost benefit gains and low projected impact of the Mary River Dam</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 6 (Page 66)</i></p>
<p>FORM/NOTE COMPLETION – enter the appropriate information in the blanks.</p>	<p>Questions 14–15</p> <p>Using only Section D above, complete the notes below. Choose NO MORE THAN 3 WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER from the passage for each answer.</p> <p>Write your answers in boxes 14–15 on your answer sheet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall cost of the dam = 14 _____ • Reduction of 15 _____ = a goal of building the dam <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 7 (Page 66)</i></p>

Task type	Example
<p>MATCHING FEATURES – find descriptions in the text and match them to people’s names or places on a given list.</p>	<p>Questions 16–17</p> <p>Which of the individuals mentioned in Australia’s Dam Story (Part 3) above has these points of view?</p> <p>Write A for Professor Arthington, I for Kevin Ingersole and P for Glenda Pickersgill in boxes 16–17 on your answer sheet.</p> <p>Which person (A, I or P) believes that...:</p> <p>16 ... most printed material about the dam is really an attempt to promote it? _____</p> <p>17 ... a large amount of the available documentation outlines the difficulties experienced by river life resulting from dams? _____</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 8 (Page 69)</i></p>

Task type	Example
<p>TRUE/FALSE/NOT GIVEN (Identifying Information) – you will be given a list of statements and asked to decide whether each statement agrees with the passage, contradicts it, or there is no reference to it in the passage.</p>	<p>Questions 18–19</p> <p>Do the following statements agree with the information given in Australia’s Dam Story (Part 3)?</p> <p>In boxes 18–19 on your answer sheet, write:</p> <p>TRUE if the statement agrees with the information</p> <p>FALSE if the statement contradicts the information</p> <p>NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this</p> <p>18 QWI accepts that social problems resulting from purchase of properties have affected everyone.</p> <p>19 People who have sold their land to QWI may not leave it for some time.</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 9 (Page 70)</i></p>
<p>MATCHING SENTENCE ENDINGS – complete a sentence according to the passage.</p> <p> Note: there may or may not be sentence endings provided in a box. If you need to choose words from the passage a word limit will be provided for your answers.</p>	<p>Questions 20–21</p> <p>Choose the best endings for the sentences below. Write your answers in boxes 20–21 on your answer sheet.</p> <p>20 After the QWI announcement, many Mary Valley residents... _____</p> <p>21 Glenda Pickersgill is likely to lose her land and property... _____</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 10 (Page 71)</i></p>

Task type	Example
<p>SENTENCE COMPLETION — complete a sentence according to the passage.</p> <p> Note: words to choose from for sentence completion may or may not be provided in a box</p>	<p>Questions 22–23</p> <p>Complete the sentences below. Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER from the text for each answer.</p> <p>22 Glenda Pickersgill was _____ when she heard of the government’s dam-building plans.</p> <p>23 Glenda is trying hard to build _____ for the anti-dam protest group.</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 11 (Page 72)</i></p>
<p>SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS — answer in one, two or three words and/or a number.</p>	<p>Questions 24–25</p> <p>Answer the questions below. Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER from the text for each answer.</p> <p>24 What has been the overall effect of QWI’s property purchase on the community? _____</p> <p>25 In what direction is Glenda’s land relative to the proposed dam? _____</p> <p> <i>Need practice? Go to Fitness Activity 12 (Page 74)</i></p>

Task type	Example
<p>TABLE/FLOW CHART COMPLETION – fill in the blank cells or blocks.</p>	<p>Questions 26–30</p> <p>Complete the diagram below, based on the text about how evaporated milk is produced.</p> <p>Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the text for each answer.</p> <p>Write your answers in boxes 26–30 on your answer sheet.</p> <p> See diagram in <i>Fitness Activity 13</i> (Page 76)</p>



Note: in the real Reading test you won't see task types change after every question or two—normally there is a group of about five questions for every task type.

Q. Where and how do I write the answers?

A. You can write the answers in the question booklet or on the answer sheet. One thing to keep in mind is that all your answers must be transferred to the Answer Sheet before the Reading test ends. Nothing written in the question booklet will be marked, and no extra time for copying answers will be given once your 60 minutes have ended.

Please read the section 'How to Avoid Problems with Your Answers' in this book (Page 14), to make sure none of your answers gets disqualified.

Q. Will I be penalised for writing answers in CAPITAL letters?

A. When doing any 'completion type' task—a task with missing words such as sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, etc—you can write in uppercase (e.g. 'AFTERNOON') or lowercase (e.g. 'afternoon') letters, as you wish. It is probably best to choose a particular way, either uppercase or lowercase, and consistently follow it.

Q. Will I need to re-phrase the information from the text in my answers?

A. With 'completion type' questions, use the words just as they are in the text. There's no need to change them in any way, or to use synonyms.

Q. Should I spell words the British or American way?

A. Both British and American spelling versions are accepted. Whichever you adopt, please make sure your spelling is correct, because misspelled answers may be penalised. For example, you can write 'color' (American spelling) or 'colour' (British spelling), but if you write 'calor' the answer will get 0 points.

Q. Will I be penalised for grammatical errors?

A. Grammar is an important part of the Reading test. Any answer with correct meaning but incorrect grammar may get zero points. A common error, for example, is to use a singular form ('apple') instead of plural form ('apples'), or to use the wrong tense or verb form ('he go' instead of 'he goes'). Such ungrammatical answers could receive zero points.

What if I...? Some Problem Situations

Q. **What if I am not familiar with the text topic?**

A. It can happen that the text you get will be on a subject you don't know much about. Good news: this doesn't mean you are in trouble.

The truth is that your chances of success don't change much, whether you get a text on a subject you know lots about, or a subject you don't feel confident about. This is because your personal knowledge and life experience **are not needed** to answer IELTS Reading questions—instead you should use the techniques described in more detail in this book.

The techniques you should apply to the text stay the same, regardless of the passage topic, and the outcome depends largely on your effective use of these techniques.

The rule for dealing with texts on an unfamiliar topic is “Don't concentrate on the words you don't know — concentrate on the words you **do** know”. Even if you don't understand a few words, guess their meaning from the context. You can achieve this by reading the words before and after the unfamiliar word, and using them to guess what the word you don't know means.

Q. **What if I am a slow reader?**

A. Slow reading is a real problem for some people, and it is often caused by:

- a) poor concentration
- b) limited vocabulary
- c) not enough practice in reading long texts (even in your first language!)
- d) poor reading techniques (e.g. reading single words, not phrases)

Slow reading is **not** an incurable disease. To train yourself to become a faster reader you should:

- a) Reduce the level of distraction in the room where you study. Don't sit in front of a window, turn off music/TV/radio, and ask other people near you to keep quiet while you're studying.

- b) Learn new words. Every time you practice reading and see a new word, you might try writing it on a flash card (in a sentence!). Spend five to ten minutes a day looking at the flash cards and trying to remember the meaning of each word.

You should also learn how to guess from context—this skill will serve you well in the IELTS Reading test. Guessing from context means using the other words around the word you don't know to work out its meaning, without using a dictionary.

- c) Read more. Use newspapers, magazines, IELTS practice tests and other sources of reading texts for practice.
- d) Stop reading sentences in a word-by-word manner; instead train yourself to read in phrases. This is a skill that fast readers possess, and that you, too, can acquire with practice. Read words in groups, and soon a change in your reading speed will become noticeable.

Example

The sentence below, when read by a slow reader, would perhaps look like this:

One – of – the – best – known – dolphin – species – the – bottlenose – dolphin – lives – in – every – ocean – of – the – world – except – the – Arctic – and – the – Antarctic – oceans.

Notice how long it takes to read this, when you stop before every word.

Now try reading each of these lines without stopping between words:

– One of the best known dolphin species, –
 – the bottlenose dolphin –
 – lives in every ocean of the world –
 – except the Arctic and the Antarctic oceans.

Notice how the speed has increased. This is the right way to read in an IELTS Reading test.

Q. What if I'm almost out of time, and I still haven't answered all the questions?

A. This can (and probably will) happen to you during the first practice sessions. The IELTS Reading test is time-intensive, meaning there is a lot of reading and answering in the 60 minutes, and anyone who doesn't manage their time can end up in this situation. While it's OK to run out of time at home, in the initial stages of your preparation, try not to let it happen to you during the actual exam. Proper time management will help you avoid such scary moments—please refer to '7 Fundamentals to Make Your Reading Test a Success' on page 48.

Q. What if I have a problem with spelling?

A. Spelling answers incorrectly may cost you points, so this problem should be addressed early in your preparation. Apart from the obvious solution—to learn how to spell—which may take months, we've come up with a shortcut. Our experience with students over the years has taught us that some words are **more likely to get misspelled** than others.

Please refer to the 'Famously misspelled words list' at the end of the Listening chapter (Page 17). By learning the correct spelling of most words on that list you will greatly reduce your chances of misspelling an answer in the IELTS exam.

Q. What if I have bad handwriting?

A. Then you should try writing in block letters, not in cursive script. Block letters are harder to mess up than cursive and are easier to read. It is important that your answers are readable—if they can't be read, they can't be scored.

Q. What if I am unsure of an answer?

A. Whenever you are unsure what the correct answer is, you have two options:

Option 1 is to go over the text again, to check your answer is correct or find a different answer.

Option 2 is to guess the answer. Some questions are harder than others, and when there's no time to search the text again, guessing is a legitimate solution. Instead of leaving the answer blank, write your best guess in its space on the answer sheet. There is no penalty for writing incorrect answers, so this can't do any harm—and with some luck you may earn a few points!

7 Fundamentals to Make Your Reading Test a Success

1. Skim and scan instead of reading word by word

Shocking as it may sound, you do not have the time to read the passages entirely. If you try to read and remember every single word in your question paper, you will run out of time well before even getting to the stage where you answer the questions.

The trick is to read only the important and meaningful parts, and that is achieved by skimming and scanning. 'Skimming' means reading fast to get the general idea, and 'scanning' means looking for particular information. Your eyes should be skimming the paragraphs to get the general idea of each, and scanning the paper like radar, looking for keywords, main points and other important information. It is a good idea to circle or underline names, dates and keywords.

How and when to skim

Although this is not the only way, most students of IELTS-Blog.com reported better results when they skimmed the text first. Skimming includes reading the title/heading, looking at pictures (if any) and reading the first sentence of every paragraph. Normally this is enough to harness an overall understanding of the text.

Then it's time to read the questions. Not all of them, of course, but the first group. Questions are broken down into groups, and usually there are questions of just one certain type in each group. There is a set of instructions for every group of questions and an example; read them closely before you begin scanning the text.

How and when to scan

Scanning works best when you have an idea about what you're looking for. When you know what the question is, and you've seen an example answer, you know what sort of information you need to find, and what the answer should look like.

Some questions will require you to scan the text to find the answer; others will require reading in detail. Scanning works best for the following task types:

- **Sentence/Notes/Table/Flow chart/Summary completion**
- **Short answer questions**
- **Labelling a diagram**
- **Matching features (finding Information in paragraphs)**

Why? Because these question types can be answered by finding a keyword in the paragraph and reading around it, and scanning is the way to find a keyword in text quickly.

Always try to guess what information is missing before you start scanning—this will make finding the answer easier.

Try this in action — go to Reading Fitness Activities 6 and 8, to see how it works (Pages 66, 69).

2. Use the text to guide you to the answers

This part we need you to **read closely**, because it may help you find answers to certain types of questions more quickly.

Answers to some types of questions appear **sequentially** in text. This means that the answer to question 2 appears in the text after the answer to question 1, and the answer to question 3 appears after the answer to question 2. In other words you won't have to go back in the text to find the next answer if you do the questions sequentially—you will always be moving forward.

This is important because with each answered question you have less and less text to search—which enables you to find the later answers in a group more quickly.

Here are the task types for which answers appear **in the order of the passage**:

- **Sentence completion (with or without a list of options)**
- **Short-answer questions,**
- **True/False/Not Given,**
- **Yes/No/Not Given,**
- **Multiple choice.**

When solving these types of questions, mark the sentence where you found the answer. To find the next answer, you will only need to search **after** that mark.

Try this in action — go to Reading Fitness Activities 10 and 12, to see how it works (Pages 71, 74).



Note: when you finish one group of questions and move on to the next group, you may have to go back to the first paragraph and start looking for answers from the top.

3. Use words from the text

Answers to certain types of questions should be copied straight from the passage, exactly as they are. This is great news for you as a test taker—firstly, you don't need to think of an answer from off the top of your head (if it's not in the passage, if you can't copy it exactly as it is—then it's not the right answer). Secondly, when you copy words you won't have to worry about spelling—all you do is copy them as shown.

The task types that require **words to be copied** from the passage **without changing** anything are:

- **Sentence completion (without a list of options)**
- **Short-answer questions**
- **Summary completion (without a list of options)**
- **Table/notes/flowchart completion**
- **Diagram labelling**

Try this in action — go to Reading Fitness Activities 7 and 13, to see how it works (Pages 66, 76).

4. Read in detail only if you have to

Scanning works fine with some task types—but not all. The trick is to know when you really need to read parts of the text closely. A study that we conducted of IELTS-Blog visitors, helped us to identify these task types that require **reading in detail** to find the correct answer:

- **True/False/Not Given**
- **Yes/No/Not Given**
- **Matching Paragraph Headings**
- **Matching Information**

5. Pay close attention to task instructions in the test paper

In IELTS, following instructions is not voluntary—it's mandatory. They define the exact way you should answer, and if you deviate, you may lose points.

In particular, the word limit is crucial, so when the instructions ask you to answer '**USING NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER**', do the right thing and write one, two or three words, and/or a number, but not more. Don't repeat words unnecessarily (if they already are in the sentence that you're required to complete), and don't write two answers/options if they ask for just one.



Note: articles (a/an/the) and prepositions (e.g. in/on/by) count as words.

For more information read the section 'How to Avoid Problems with Your Answers' (Page 14).

6. Know when to move on

Let's face it—IELTS is not a 100% kind of test. In our years of working with test-takers through IELTS-Blog.com, from thousands of candidates we have come across only a few people who have answered 100% of the reading questions correctly.

When practicing, you may find that some questions are just harder than others and require more time to find the correct answer. This is why there's no shame in putting a question mark next to a tough question and moving on to the next one—in fact it's much better than getting stuck and losing too much time.

If you have some time left after all the other questions are answered, go back to the tough questions and try to answer them. Or, if you're out of time—just write your best guess.

7. Manage your time

Finding yourself in a situation where there is almost no time left, yet many questions haven't been answered can be very stressful. The good news is that with proper preparation there is no reason why it should happen to you in the actual exam.

Practice answering questions using firm time limits for each text/section. This will help to prevent possible loss of points, caused by spending too much time agonising about answers to questions in the earlier texts.

How to manage time in a General Training Reading test

The General Training Reading test may consist of five or six texts. The texts are divided into three sections which progress in difficulty.

Section 1 can have two or three shorter texts with general information such as advertisements for restaurants, courses, etc. Section 2 is on work-related issues—company policies, working conditions, staff responsibilities and so forth—and can contain up to two texts. Section 3 has the longest, single text.

This is why you should allocate about 15 minutes for completion of the tasks based on the first section, around 20 minutes for those based on the second, and 25 minutes or so for those linked to the final section. If you are writing the answers in the question booklet, transfer each section's answers within the time slot allocated to that particular section.

Before you begin to read, write when each time allocation begins and ends. When your time is up, move on to the next section. Make sure you transfer the answers to the Answer Sheet within the time limit allocated to that particular section. Don't leave the transferring of answers till the very end—otherwise you will be robbing the last section of all those minutes required to transfer your complete set of answers to the Answer Sheet.

If you find it very difficult, almost impossible to complete the first two sections in 15 and 20 minutes (after you have tried and practiced), then consider a different strategy, more suitable for people with **weaker** reading skills. Concentrate on the first two sections and do them more thoroughly, at the expense of the third section. Yes, you may not have enough time to finish all the questions in the third section, but spending more time on the first two sections can help you get more correct answers there. Experiment with these two alternative strategies and find out which one helps you get a larger number of correct answers.

Techniques for Answering Reading Tasks Quickly & Accurately

TASK TYPE » Matching Paragraph Headings

Technique 1

Matching headings is considered a hard task by some students, but only because they do it the hard way. Here is the easy way: when you match headings, go in the order of **paragraphs**, not in the order of headings. Go to paragraph 1, look for a suitable heading for it in the list, then go to paragraph 2, look for a suitable heading for it, and so on.

In each paragraph, read the first sentence, and then look for a heading. If you can't find the right heading, read the second sentence, then search the list of headings again. If you still can't find the heading, read the last sentence, and then look for a heading. If still you get nothing, then read the whole paragraph before you look for a heading.

This technique is based on the fact that the first sentence of a paragraph often contains its main point. In many cases reading the first sentence will be enough to find the right heading, but even if you need to read another sentence, this method will still save you time because it doesn't require you to read every paragraph in full. What's more, compared to the other, inefficient way students often match headings—when they go in the order of headings, read each heading and try to match a paragraph to it—our way **saves** you from reading the same paragraph over and over again.

Instructions will tell you when a heading can't be used more than once. In that case, any heading that you matched should be clearly marked as 'taken' on the list (simply by putting a tick '✓' next to it). This will save you from considering it again for another paragraph.

Technique 2

If you come across a tricky paragraph that requires a long time for a heading to be found and even then you are still unsure, use the elimination technique. Move on and solve the rest of the paragraphs. After you've done that there will be fewer headings to choose from, and it will be easier to pick the right one. Even if you end up guessing, with fewer options to pick from, your chances of success increase.

Try this in action — go to Fitness Activity 1 and see how it works (Page 60).

TASK TYPE » True/False/Not Given (or Yes/No/Not Given)

This type of task has proven to be problematic for some students, and here is why: apart from testing your English, True/False/Not Given questions test your logical thinking as well.

However with some practice your logical thinking will improve and solving this type of questions will become easier.

Technique 1

The basic rule is that if the statement clearly agrees with text, the answer is True, if the statement explicitly contradicts the text, the answer is False, and if the statement says something that the text doesn't say, it's Not Given. It works in a very similar way with Yes/No/Not Given.

It is also helpful to keep in mind that the answers to True/False/Not Given and Yes/No/Not Given questions appear sequentially in the passage. This narrows down the search for you, because once you've found the answer to question 1, the answer to question 2 will be somewhere in the sentences that follow, not in the preceding part of the text.

Technique 2

When you practice at home, your work doesn't stop after you've answered all the questions. For this type of task there is a very powerful technique—it helps you turn your weakness into your strength.

Once you've checked your answers against the correct ones in your book/sample test, and you know which of your answers are wrong, go back and try to understand exactly **why** these answers are wrong, and why the ones in the book are correct. This is a very important step, as it enables you to learn from your mistakes.

Then understand why you answered the way you did, what confused you, what tricked you into giving the wrong answer, and try not to make the same mistake the next time. We live, we learn, right?

Try this in action — go to Fitness Activities 5 and 9, to see how it works (Pages 65, 70).

TASK TYPE » Summary/Sentence Completion (Filling in Blanks)

Technique 1

To make filling in blanks quicker, easier and more accurate, try to guess what is missing. Even if you can't guess the meaning of the word, you can still guess whether it's, say, a verb, a noun, or an adjective, by looking at the words around the gap.

Once you know the kind of word that's missing, it is easier to find it in the passage or in the list of options in a box.

While reading the sentence around the gap, also note what it's about, and use that information when you're scanning the text to locate the paragraph where the answer might be.

In the selected paragraph look for words of the same type that could go in the gap. If a verb is missing—look at verbs, if an adjective is missing—look at adjectives, and so on. After you've found the best candidate for the gap, always read the whole sentence, to make sure it makes sense and that grammatically it is correct.

If you find yourself changing the words from the text, or their form, before writing them in the gap, it means that you've got the wrong answer. In tasks such as sentence completion or summary completion you should be able to find the correct answer right in the text, and copy it as is, without changing a word.

Technique 2

Sometimes moving on to the next gap will allow you to use the elimination technique. For example, when you have a list of words to choose from, after you've used most of the options and only have a few left it will be easier to eliminate the wrong ones, and pick the right ones.

Try this in action — go to Fitness Activities 3 and 11, to see how it works (Pages 62, 72).

TASK TYPE » Multiple Choice Questions

This type of task may confuse you by offering multiple answer options, so your best way of getting the answer right is by ‘shooting down’ the wrong options.

First, read the question and find the paragraph that is discussing the same topic. If the right answer is not immediately visible, begin eliminating the wrong answer options one by one, based on the information in the paragraph.

Pretend that each answer option is a statement of the True/False/Not Given type, and decide whether each particular answer option is True, False or Not Given, according to the passage. If the answer option is False or Not Given, cross it out—it’s not the answer.

Another helpful observation is that the answers to multiple choice questions are located sequentially in the passage. If you’ve found the answer to question 1, and the answer to question 3, then the answer to question 2 will probably be between them.

Try this in action — go to Fitness Activity 2 and see how it works (Page 61).



READING FITNESS ACTIVITIES

Improve your understanding of each of the task types that could be used in the IELTS Reading test. Try these challenging Fitness Activities, based on a text of the approximate difficulty of those used in Section 3.

Note: it is best to download and print Fitness Activities, so that you can look at the text and questions at the same time. Download printable Fitness Activities on this webpage:

<http://www.ielts-blog.com/isf-downloads/>

Read the text below and answer Fitness Activities 1–4.

AUSTRALIA'S DAM STORY (Part 1)

Section A

Measured across the continent, Australia receives an average of only 465 mm of rainfall a year, compared with Europe's 640 mm and Asia's 600 mm. High evaporation allows just 12 per cent of its rainfall to run off and reach waterways. Even so, there's enough water for everyone—but it's seldom in the right place at the right time.

Section B

European settlers solved this problem with dams. The first two—Yan Yean outside Melbourne and Lake Parramatta, Sydney—were completed in 1857. Dam building continued steadily until after World War II, when it accelerated.



Today, 500 large (more than 15 m high) dams store a total of 93,957 gigalitres (Sydney Harbour holds about 562 GL). There are also countless smaller dams, called weirs, on most Australian rivers—8000 in the Murray-Darling Basin alone—and more than 2 million farm dams.

Section C

Large dams bring quick benefits. They can provide water and electricity, mitigate flooding and create beautiful lakes. But they also have adverse impacts. The first are those on people living in the way of a dam and its lake. They may need to be moved, causing families and communities to fragment. The lake may flood farmland or natural landscape. Many of the drowned river's plants and animals fail to adapt to lake conditions. Alien fish species, introduced into the reservoir accidentally, or for recreational fishing, may further alter the biological make-up of water life, and weeds and algae may thrive in the nutrient-rich water. Downstream, changes in the river's flow and water quality usually cause irreversible effects, often down to the river mouth and beyond. Fish migration and reproduction, siltation and salinity in deltas are altered.

Section D

Once upon a time, these adverse impacts—some of which take years to manifest—weren't really considered before a dam was built. The human need for water, for drinking or to grow food, took precedence. Some people believe they should still. But over recent decades, science has deepened our understanding of natural systems, which we now know can't be broken into discrete pieces, some of which can be exploited and others not. This has given rise to the idea that the environment itself is a legitimate water consumer, with attendant needs and rights. All this calls for careful study of a river's state and function before it's dammed.

Section E

Australia's newest megadam straddles a gentle valley on the Burnett River, 260 km northwest of Brisbane. Apart from a soupy stain low on its upstream face, the concrete is spotless and dazzles the eye under the sharp Queensland sun. This is Paradise Dam, completed in 2005. Impressive though it may be, Paradise, like other large dams, is a mix of good points and bad. For some people, the bad prevail. High among the complaints has been that the rationale behind it was political. Then there are the potential environmental impacts downstream, especially around the river's mouth in Hervey Bay, which worry people such as commercial fishers and tourism operators.

Source: *Australian Geographic, Issue 89 (Jan–Mar, 2007)*

TASK TYPE » Matching Paragraph Headings



Fitness Activity 1

The reading passage on AUSTRALIA'S DAM STORY (Part 1) has five sections, A–E. Choose the correct heading for sections B–E from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number i–ix below. Choose each heading once only.

List of Headings

- i Problems in Paradise?
- ii Benefits outstrip problems
- iii Development of dams in Australia
- iv The importance of water to humans
- v How to solve problems with dams
- vi Australia's rainfall profile [Example]
- vii The role of science in the planning of dams
- viii Disadvantages outweigh gains
- ix Meeting Sydney's water needs

1	Section A	vi [Example]
2	Section B	_____
3	Section C	_____
4	Section D	_____
5	Section E	_____

TASK TYPE » Multiple Choice Questions



Fitness Activity 2

- 1 Using **ONLY Section C** above choose the appropriate letter **A,B,C**, or **D**.

One of the problems of dams is that:

- A new plant species may change the biological balance
- B they cause more drowning
- C they lead to changes in salt levels in water further up river
- D weeds and algae can't survive as easily

- 2 Using **ONLY Section D** above, choose the appropriate letter **A,B,C**, or **D**.

According to the passage, the negative features of dams:

- A were originally given precedence over the demand for water
- B were at first taken into account before construction
- C have given rise to more sensitivity about the environment
- D have led to national studies of river care

- 3 Using **ONLY Section E** above, choose the appropriate letter **A,B,C**, or **D**.

According to the passage, Paradise Dam:

- A has been entirely beneficial
- B is situated beyond a valley
- C has provided environmental advantages for tourists
- D may have been built for political reasons

TASK TYPE » Summary Completion



Fitness Activity 3

Complete the summary below based on **Sections C and D ONLY**, above.
Choose **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD** from the text for each answer.

Dams have benefits and drawbacks. For example, they provide water and **1** _____ but those residing in the dam's path may have to be **2** _____. The reservoir may **3** _____ agricultural land, and biological changes may include unwanted fish species. In recent years better understanding of nature has been helped by **4** _____. The environment is now seen as having rights just like every other **5** _____ of water.

TASK TYPE » Labelling Diagrams



Fitness Activity 4

Look at the diagrams of types of dams (**A–D**) and read each dam description below. Label each description with the appropriate letter (**A–D**).

Dam Type

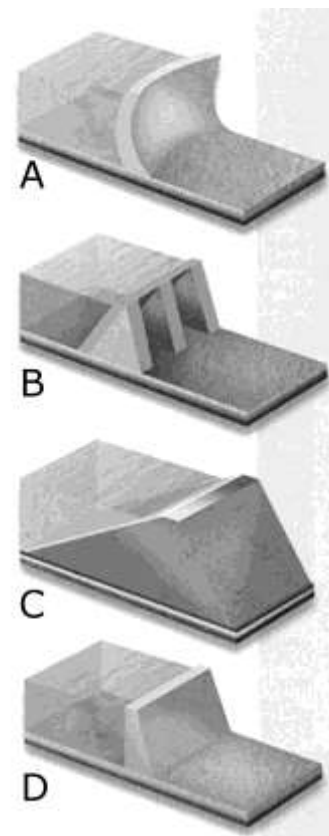
Description of Dams

_____ **Embankment dams** use a long-sloped, massive volume of rock, gravel and sand, with the finest materials in the centre to form a waterproof core.

_____ **Buttress dams** have 45 degree walls that transfer the force downwards.

_____ **Gravity dams** are thick, massive structures with a vertical face that can hold back enormous amounts of water under their own weight.

_____ **Arch dams** have curved sides which redirect a lot of pressure to the valley sides.



Read the text below and answer Fitness Activities 5–7.

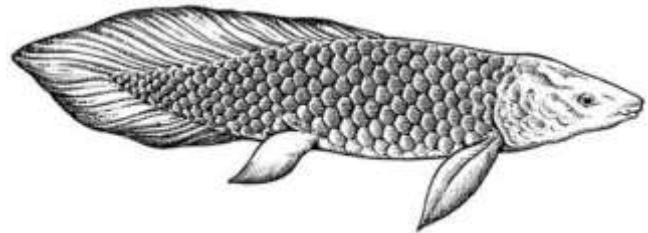
AUSTRALIA'S DAM STORY (Part 2)

Section A THREATENED SPECIES

But nothing has galvanised public opinion more than the plight of the endangered Australian, or Queensland, lungfish. Among the last of a group that lived 400 million years ago, this once-abundant fish is restricted mostly to the Burnett and Mary rivers. Biologists believe Paradise Dam has had, and will have, serious consequences for it. A fishway was installed to comply with the

Commonwealth's Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act), which lists the lungfish as endangered. The Act requires the fish's spawning and nursery

habitat to be preserved. Jean Joss, Professor of Biology at Sydney's Macquarie University, says lungfish spawn in slow-flowing shallows with plenty of native water plants. "When it [Paradise dam] is full, it will have permanently destroyed 42 km of lungfish spawning/nursery grounds," she says.



Section B GROWTH AND THIRST

Declining water consumption in most of Australia has stalled dam-building in recent years. But not in south-east Queensland. There, the population is set to soar from 2.8 million today to 5 million in 2050, and water consumption is expected to climb with it. The region mirrors not only what has happened historically elsewhere in Australia but also what's happening across the world. Look here and you see humanity's past and its future. South-east Queensland consumes about 440,000 ML a year. The Queensland Government says that by 2050 the region will need 330,000–490,000 ML more, even with water restrictions.

Section C ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR MEETING WATER DEMAND

Prodded by drought but committed to economic growth, the government has assembled a mix of measures to provide the extra water. Among them are recycling, desalination, raising some existing dams and building two new ones – Traveston Crossing on the Mary River, and Wyaralong nearer to Brisbane.

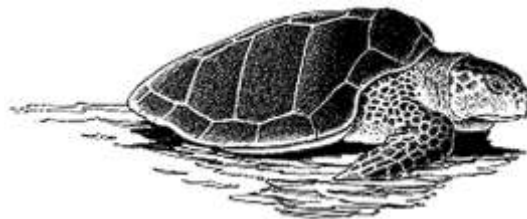
Section D THE MARY RIVER DAM PROPOSALS

Queensland Water Infrastructure (QWI) Pty Ltd would build the dam in two stages. Stage 1, due by 2020 and costing \$1.6 billion, would flood 3000 ha of farmland and 334 properties; Stage 2, due after 2040, would raise the total cost to \$2.5 billion and flood an extra 7135 ha and 265 properties. The dam wall would be made of RCC (Roller Compacted Concrete) at its western end and would merge with an earth-and-rock embankment.

Since one aim of the dam is to limit flooding in Gympie, 20 km to the north, the spillway would have six floodgates. QWI aims to build the dam to Stage 2 height immediately so that the only extra work needed later to raise the water level by another 8.5 m would be the fitting of higher gates. As with Paradise dam, there was talk of political expediency, but the government insisted the looming water crisis allowed no choice.

Section E SATISFYING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE MARY RIVER DAM

In its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the project, published in October 2007, QWI maintained the dam was the cheapest option offering maximum water returns. On the environment it was upbeat, saying downstream impacts would be negligible and that it could manage the effects around the dam's footprint such that wildlife might even be better off than now. As in the Burnett, the lungfish is central here. But in the Mary it's joined by the Mary River cod and the Mary River turtle. Since all are legally protected under national environmental legislation, the project needs federal approval. A decision based on the final Environmental Impact Statement is due soon.



TASK TYPE » Yes/No/Not Given (Identifying Writer's Views)**Fitness Activity 5**

Do the following statements reflect the claims of the writer in **Section A** above?

Write:

YES	if the statement reflects the claims of the writer
NO	if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer
NOT GIVEN	if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

1 The deteriorating situation of the lungfish has stimulated public support.

2 The habitat of the lungfish is now limited primarily to only two rivers.

3 Biologists officially consider the lungfish to be an endangered species.

4 The breeding grounds of the lungfish have no legal protection.

TASK TYPE » Matching Information



Fitness Activity 6

Which Section (B, C, D or E) above contains the following information?

- 1 Measures for accommodating likely increases in demand for water. ____
- 2 Data illustrating current and projected water demand in Queensland. ____
- 3 Cost benefit gains and low projected impact of the Mary River Dam. ____
- 4 The aquatic life affected by the proposed new dam. ____
- 5 The likely timing and sequencing of dam construction. ____

TASK TYPE » Form/Note Completion



Fitness Activity 7

Using only **Section D** above, complete the notes below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the passage for each answer.

- Overall cost of the dam = 1 _____
- Reduction of 2 _____ = a goal of building the dam
- 3 _____ to be fitted to enable increase in water level
- Government claimed no alternative due to approach of 4 _____

Read the text below and answer Fitness Activities 8–12.

AUSTRALIA'S DAM STORY (Part 3)

For Mary Valley residents, nothing will ever repair damage already caused to families and communities by the dam's announcement and Queensland Water Infrastructure's (QWI) purchase of properties in the dam's footprint. QWI acknowledges that stress, depression, community disintegration and deep mistrust have resulted but says not everyone has suffered.

By late 2007, QWI had reached sale agreements for 65 per cent of the land it needs before it can build the new dam. Many people who sold have leased back their former properties and may continue to live on them for a time. One who hasn't sold is Glenda Pickersgill. Glenda breeds cattle about 1 km upstream of the proposed dam site. Her house and land would vanish under water at Stage 1. The farm has been in Glenda's family for 30 years and she has owned it for 20. Glenda was devastated by the Queensland Government's announcement about planning to build a new dam.

As a member of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group, an anti-dam residents' coalition, Glenda has thrown all her energy into getting information about the project into the community and rallying support for the campaign against it. Anti-dam protest signs dot the Mary Valley. The signs cluster in greatest quantity and variety at Kandanga's old railway station, used these days only by a historic steam train. There, an airy weatherboard shed has become the headquarters and public information centre of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group.



The group's chairman, Kevin Ingersole, 63, is a dynamic, semi-retired management consultant who bought a property in the valley five years ago. At Stage 1 he would lose much of his land. Kevin is bitter but, like Glenda, he diverts his emotions into action. He considers the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and its associated documents to be a magnificent sales pitch for building a dam, and claims that the government has not demonstrated that the proposed dam at Traveston Crossing is the best long-term solution for south-east Queensland's water-supply needs.

QWI's documents certainly attempt to build a convincing case for the dam's long-term economic importance to the region, emphasising increases in gross regional product, employment and business potential. QWI also claims that the dam's long-term cost will be more than \$200 million less than the 'next best' water-supply alternative, a desalination plant. What irks Mary Valley residents most, however, is that water from the proposed reservoir would be pumped out of the area. Of the lake's 153,000 ML at Stage 1, 70,000 ML would go out every year. At Stage 2 the lake would hold 570,000 ML and would yield up to 150,000 ML a year. Professor Angela Arthington says the environmental consequences of such extraction, together with the flooding of a shallow valley, are predictable because they characterise all megadams in similar landscapes. She believes that thousands of publications document the adverse effects of dams on river and estuarine ecosystems.

TASK TYPE » Matching Features**Fitness Activity 8**

Which of the individuals mentioned in Australia's Dam Story (Part 3) above has these points of view? Write **A** (for Professor Arthington), **I** (for Kevin Ingersole) and **P** (for Glenda Pickersgill).

Which person (**A**, **I** or **P**) believes that

- 1 ...most printed material about the dam is really an attempt to promote it? ____
- 2 ...a large amount of the available documentation outlines the difficulties experienced by river life resulting from dams? ____
- 3 ...it is vital to distribute material about the dam to the local population. ____

TASK TYPE » True/False/Not Given (Identifying Information)**Fitness Activity 9**

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Australia's Dam Story (Part 3)? Answer:

TRUE	if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE	if the statement contradicts the information
NOT GIVEN	if there is no information on this

- 1 QWI accepts that social problems resulting from purchase of properties have affected everyone.

- 2 People who have sold their land to QWI may not leave it for some time.

- 3 The majority of the anti-dam signs are near Kandanga Railway station.

- 4 The EIS discusses the sale of Kevin Ingersole's land to the government.

- 5 QWI's documents predict that regional wealth will grow.

- 6 QWI consider that the dam will be less expensive than a desalination plant.

- 7 People who live in Mary Valley are annoyed about the likely loss of water from their area when the reservoir is in operation.

- 8 Professor Arthington is unsure about the environmental outcomes likely to arise as a result of the new dam.

TASK TYPE » Matching Sentence Endings**Fitness Activity 10**

Choose the best endings for sentences 1–4 from the **List of Options A–H** in the box below.

- 1 After the QWI announcement, many Mary Valley residents

- 2 Glenda Pickersgill is likely to lose her land and property

- 3 Five years ago, the chairman of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group

- 4 Angela Arthington believes that megadams cause flooding of valleys

List of Options

- A** to her family during the next thirty years
- B** purchased a valley property
- C** which are extracted during construction
- D** suffered traumatic psychological effects
- E** can be repaired by avoiding all the damage
- F** was a full-time management consultant
- G** during Stage 1 of the dam's development
- H** that are characteristically shallow

TASK TYPE » Sentence Completion**Fitness Activity 11**

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER** from the text for each answer.

- 1 Glenda Pickersgill was _____ when she heard of the government's dam-building plans.
- 2 Glenda is trying hard to build _____ for the anti-dam protest group.
- 3 Kevin Ingersole remains unconvinced that the proposed dam is the optimal _____ to regional water needs.
- 4 At Stage 2 _____ would be extracted from the lake annually.

TASK TYPE » Short-answer Questions

Read this job advert and answer Fitness Activity 12.

IS THIS JOB FOR YOU?

Job: Sales Support role in Fast Growing Retail Business

Location: Norwest

Salary: \$40k–\$45k + Super

- Are you someone who loves people, loves customer service, has great computer skills?
- Do you like following procedures, enjoy juggling multiple tasks at once, and love getting things done? Yes ?? GREAT !!

This well established company is looking for a bright, bubbly individual who wants to get an administration and customer service role. This role could lead anywhere for you—Sales, HR, Business Management—the choice is yours! Oh, and this role is URGENT—so you could be in your new career next week!

Here are the qualities we are looking for:

- Confident, Bubbly, Articulate
- Excellent communication skills
- High analytical skills, Great attention to detail
- You understand the importance of data integrity and client satisfaction
- Proactive, takes initiative, good work ethic
- Real people person who loves executing tasks

You need to be proficient with Microsoft Word & Excel.
Sound like you? Then tell us about YOU!!



Fitness Activity 12

Answer the questions below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR A NUMBER** from the advertisement for each answer.

1 In what area of business is the job being offered?

2 What is the maximum base salary of the advertised job?

3 Apart from Human Resource or Management roles, what other future area of work could this job lead to?

4 When could you commence work, if you obtained this job?

5 A suitable candidate would be able to operate which software program?

TASK TYPE » Flow Chart/Table Completion

Read the text below and answer Fitness Activity 13.

HOW EVAPORATED MILK IS PRODUCED

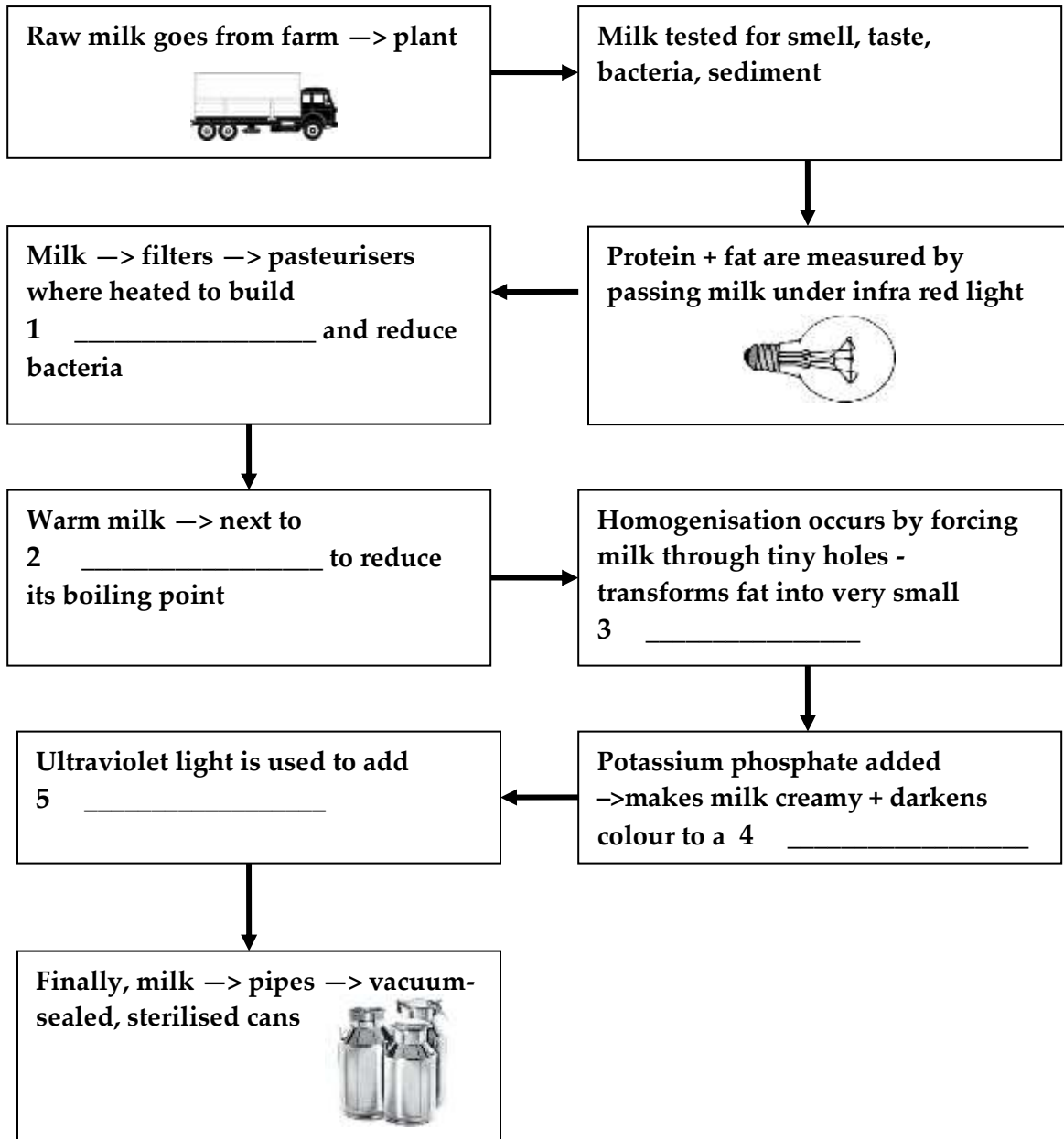


First, the raw milk is transported from the dairy farm to the plant in refrigerated tank trucks. At the plant, the milk is tested for odour, taste, bacteria, sediment, and the composition of milk protein and milk fat. The composition of protein and fat is measured by passing the milk under highly sensitive infrared lights. After this, the milk is piped through filters and into the pasteurizers where it is quickly heated in one of two ways: the High Temperature Short Time method (HTST) subjects the milk to temperatures of 71.6°C for 15 seconds; the Ultra High Temperature (UHT) method heats the milk to 138°C for two seconds. The two methods increase the milk's stability, and decrease both the chance of coagulation during storage, and the bacteria levels. Next, the warm milk is piped to an evaporator. Through the process of vacuum evaporation, (a pressure lower than atmospheric pressure) the boiling point of the milk is lowered to 40–45°C. As a result, the milk is concentrated to 30–40% solids and has little or no cooked flavour. The milk is then homogenized by forcing it under high pressure through tiny holes. This breaks down the fat globules into minute particles, improving its colour and stability. Pre-measured amounts of a stabilizing salt, such as potassium phosphate, are added to the milk to make it smooth and creamy. This stabilization causes the milk to turn a pale tan. Finally, the milk is passed under a series of ultraviolet lights to fortify it with Vitamin D. Finally, the milk is piped into pre-sterilized cans that are vacuum-sealed.



Fitness Activity 13

Complete the diagram below based on the text 'How evaporated milk is produced'. Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text for each answer.



Finished all 13 tasks? You're a hero!



IELTS WRITING

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- ❖ **Overview**
- ❖ **Writing Lesson – Task 1 Letter**
 - First questions answered (3 types of letter)
 - What if I...? Some problem situations
 - 8 secrets of how to impress your assessor in Writing Task 1
 - Reduce 8 weaknesses to achieve a higher score
- ❖ **Writing Task 1 Fitness Activities**
- ❖ **Writing Lesson – Task 2 Essay**
 - First questions answered (4 types of essay)
 - What if I...? Some problem situations
 - 11 secrets of how to impress your assessor in Writing Task 2
 - Reduce 5 weaknesses to achieve a higher score
- ❖ **Writing Task 2 Fitness Activities**
- ❖ **Rated Samples of Writing Tasks 1 and 2**

OVERVIEW

Writing Test Basics

Q. How is the Writing test structured?

A. The Writing test has two tasks called Task 1 and Task 2, as briefly described below:

	Writing Task 1	Writing Task 2
Word limit	150 words minimum	250 words minimum
Suggested time limit	20 minutes	40 minutes
Overall Score	On a band scale from 0–9 with half band scores	



Note: Task 2 score contributes a little more to the overall score than Task 1.

Q. Where should I write my answers to the Writing tasks?

A. You will be given two Answer sheets on which you should write your Task 1 and Task 2 responses:

- Each Answer sheet has a front and back, with a total of about 40 lines.
- The front side of each Answer sheet has some instructions, leaving only half of that page for writing.
- The Answer sheets for Task 1 and 2 are almost identical; they differ in colour and titling.
- Where to start your answer to both Task 1 and Task 2 is clearly indicated.

Remember, too:

- You can do the tasks in **any order**, which means you can decide to do Task 2 first if you prefer, or if you are worried about how best to use the time.
- You can ask for additional paper if you need it, in that case all the pages will be stapled together.

Q. How is my writing assessed?

A. By a real person!

Each task is marked by a trained IELTS assessor who reads your answer and gives you a score (from 0 to 9) for different aspects of your performance by comparing what you have written with performance descriptions for different score levels in these four areas:

- **task fulfilment** in Task 1 (Did you do what you were asked to do?) or **task response** in Task 2 (Did you respond to all parts of the task and offer a clear viewpoint?)
- **vocabulary** (How varied, appropriate and extensive is your use?)
- **grammar** (How flexibly and accurately are you able to use different sentence types?)
- **coherence and cohesion** (How well is your answer structured in terms of ideas and paragraphing; how well do sentences link together to build logical movement from one idea to another?)



Note: you may lose marks if you don't write enough words for either answer.

Q. How can I impress the assessor?

A. Well done! This is the **key question** in our book.

There are many ways to manage your answers to each task so that you impress your assessor. These will be discussed and practised extensively later in this section of the book.

Q. How should I begin my preparation?

A. First, have a look at the Task 1 section on Page 80 and the Task 2 section on Page 118.

While going through our advice for Task 1 and Task 2 you may notice that we give several identical suggestions for both tasks. This is because there are **important principles that apply to both Task 1 and Task 2**. It seems a good idea to be reminded of them so you can learn how to apply them while practising, and, more importantly, in the actual IELTS exam.

WRITING LESSON – Task 1 Letter

First Questions Answered

Q. What kind of task will I be given?

A. For Task 1 you will be asked to write a letter, following some task guidelines which outline a situation and list three, separate features for inclusion. The letter will be one of several possible types:

Type 1 — a letter to a friend in response to some situation or problem.

Example

A friend has invited you to their wedding. Write a letter to your friend:

- Thank your friend for the invitation
- Explain why you can't go
- Suggest one or two possible wedding presents you could send

Type 2 — a letter to an organization or to someone you don't know, perhaps involving a complaint, an invitation, or some other situation that needs attention.

Example

You hired a car and another vehicle crashed into your hire car, while you were in a shop. Write to the manager of the car hire company:

- Say who you are and when you hired the car
- Explain what happened
- Ask what the company is likely to do as a result

Type 3 — a letter to someone you may know a little but who is not a friend.

Example

Your neighbours are overseas but have offered to let you use their holiday house at the seaside. Write a letter to your neighbours:

- Thank them for their offer and ask if the house is available for particular dates
- Explain why you'd like to spend some time there
- Ask some questions to find out more details about the house

Q. How do I start planning and organizing my answer?

A. You need to read the task instructions carefully to establish the central purpose of the letter (for example to make a complaint, to make a request) and then think up some ideas for the content of short paragraphs addressing each of the three listed parts of the letter, which are given in the task (see the above examples).

Q. What do I have to do to respond well to the question?

A. Your task is to:

- identify the central purpose or reason for writing the letter,
- write a well-organised letter which communicates appropriately in terms of the type of letter and the relationship with the person you are writing to,
- Write in an appropriate and consistent tone (e.g. polite formal, polite semi-formal, or informal),
- include ideas or information which address relevantly each of the three listed parts in the task,
- end the letter appropriately,
- write accurately and clearly,
- avoid copying or repeating too many words from the task.

Q. How long do I have to complete Task 1?

A. You have about 20 minutes for this task and must write at least 150 words, **but...**

- Be careful not to write too much detail or too many words as this may rob you of time for Task 2.
- Aim for a maximum of about 170 words and a minimum of 150.

Q. How can I be sure to use the time wisely?

A. Practise before the test in order to establish a systematic routine, like this one:

What you should do:	How?	Why?
Stage 1 — understand the task	By studying the task for one to two minutes especially the three required parts and purpose of letter	To guarantee relevance of your plan and clear structure of the answer
Stage 2 — plan your answer for about two minutes	Build ideas, perhaps by thinking of a similar situation from your life, then write notes in three sections to fit the three parts of the task	To organise your answer into three relevant, logical sections
Stage 3 — write a systematic answer neatly and with clear paragraphing	By following your plan for about 15 minutes.	It looks more organized, well structured, clear, and is easier to read
Stage 4 — check your work quickly	By skim reading; quick word count by counting number of words in a typical line and then multiply by number of lines (e.g. 10 words x 15 lines = 150)	To pick up any obvious mistakes and to check approximate number of words used

Q. Is 15 minutes enough time to write 150 words?

A. Yes, with practice.

Practise writing answers to Task 1 questions with a 20-minute limit.

Get used to following the pattern above. Gradually you will be able to do it, and will feel a sense of reduced panic and more effective management of this task.



GOLD STAR ADVICE No. 1:

Planning time saves writing time by making writing time structured and managed.

Q. What is a 'clock victim' and why should I avoid becoming one?

A. Some candidates spend too much time counting words or watching the clock and lose connection and focus with the actual task. Practise doing Task 1 questions until you have developed a reliable routine.

Remember, being organised is important because you can then create an organised answer. A relevant, organised answer impresses the assessor because it seems professional even if it still has some vocabulary and grammar weaknesses.

What if I...? Some Problem Situations

Q. What if I don't understand one or two of the aspects of the letter?

A. Most candidates understand at least some things. So you should:

- a) Build the letter around the parts you do understand.
- b) Try to guess the meaning of the other parts by imagining that it is a real situation and using the other aspects of the situation to help you.

Q. What if I can't think of enough ideas?

A. Try not to think of the letter as belonging to another universe, culture or only a language test situation. Use your own life and something similar to the letter situation that has happened to you or someone you know. Build your ideas around that real situation. This may also help the tone of the letter to seem more authentic.

Q. What if I don't know how to write a letter requiring me to complain or to explain a problem?

A. Do the fitness activities and study the IELTS Grammar Doctor in this book, pages 98 and 187. These have useful sections on how to:

- a) Select appropriate verb tenses in letter writing.
- b) Build vocabulary which is appropriate to particular types of letter.
- c) Build awareness of tone by using appropriate levels of formality and politeness.

Q. What if I am only half way through and already out of time?

A. This probably means either:

- that you haven't organised and planned your **overall answer** enough before writing,
- or that your language level is low and it takes you a long time either to think of what to write, or to express it clearly.

Either way, you have to decide whether to continue on Task 1 or move on to Task 2. Some options:

Option 1 — if the Task 2 topic looks easy, you might give yourself another five minutes to complete Task 1 before changing to Task 2.

Option 2 — if the Task 2 topic looks tricky and needs full planning time, try to finish the Task 1 paragraph you are writing, then move on to Task 2 and allow yourself five minutes before the end of the test to return to complete Task 1. Aim to write 250 words approximately for Task 2.

Q. What if writing about one or two of the letter's parts takes me much more than 150 words?

A. This usually means that you haven't planned and balanced your letter's three central paragraphs well enough. Before writing, you needed to look more carefully at the task and balance the number of ideas. Remember there is not enough time to write in too much detail.

Q. What if I make a mistake, how do I fix it?

A. If it is a mistake concerning **lack of relevance**, cross out the paragraph neatly with one diagonal line, and write a more relevant one. If it is a major mistake, such as **misunderstanding the purpose** of the letter and realizing your mistake only after writing a paragraph or two, cross out the first attempt with a diagonal line, then miss a line and start again but with a tighter plan to avoid too much detail. Aim to write at least 140 words in the time remaining. Don't panic, because you will probably be able to write more easily once you have realized your mistake.

Q. What if I feel so anxious that my mind goes blank?

A. Stay as calm as you can. This is an opportunity to manage your emotions and become stronger. Follow this 'calming routine': close your eyes and breathe systematically for one minute. To do this:

- while breathing in, silently count 'one, two, three, four',
- then hold your breath counting from one to four again,
- and then breathe out counting once more from one to four in your head.

After one minute, return to the question, and make every action systematic and structured. You have to manage panic and not let it control you. This one-minute 'calming routine' is not time wasted but **time managed!**

Secrets of How to Impress Your Assessor in General Writing Task 1

Your assessor is a busy person with perhaps 20 Writing tests to score. Perhaps yours is the last one so the assessor may be a little tired. Within the limitations of your English, you need to create a positive relationship with the assessor through the quality of your writing.



GOLD STAR ADVICE No 2: *Your Writing is YOU.*

Everything you write and how you present your writing represents 'YOU' in the mind of the assessor because you will not meet that assessor in person.

Q. How can I show the assessor that my writing is worth a higher score?

A. There are ways to write a letter that always create a good impression.

A few ways have been mentioned briefly already, but read these more detailed guidelines.

Follow these detailed suggestions and your work will be appreciated by your assessor:

1. Take care with the layout and appearance of your letter

Explanation

A handwritten letter, even a formal letter, is always a personal reflection of 'YOU' so you need to take particular care with its layout and appearance, even if you feel under time pressure. Avoid crossing out words too often and make your handwriting crisp and neat. Leave lines between the start ('Dear ...') and the first paragraph, and between each paragraph, and between the final paragraph and the ending ('Yours, ...').

Why is this important?

As this is the assessor's very first impression of your management of the task, you need to communicate a positive feeling of competence and care.

2. Try to make the purpose of the letter clear in the introductory paragraph, and allow one separate paragraph for each of the three parts in the task

Explanation

The clear structuring of your letter into clear paragraphs makes it easier to read and its relevance to the task easier to establish.

Why is this important?

The assessor can more easily reward you if it is easy to see that you have organised the letter effectively and have made it easier to read and easier to locate the purpose of the letter and its contents.

3. Establish and maintain an appropriate tone in your letter

Explanation

The use of language in any letter reflects the relationship between writer and receiver (e.g. how well you know the person you are writing to), and needs to establish an appropriate level of formality in that culture, in terms of the purpose of writing (for example, the need to be polite even if you are complaining).

Why is this important?

The assessor, as a native speaker, or equivalent, has been deeply immersed since childhood in the culture in which English is used, and is therefore highly sensitive to the subtle use of language in different relationships and for different purposes when writing. Inappropriate tone immediately indicates lack of understanding of culture and seems naïve and low-level.

Example

Task: A friend has invited you to their wedding. Write a letter to your friend:

- Thank your friend for the invitation (**Part 1**)
- Explain why you can't go (**Part 2**)
- Suggest one or two possible wedding presents you could send (**Part 3**)

SAMPLE LETTER



Inappropriate tone

Dear Mr and Mrs Smith,

Thank you for your wedding invitation. It was much appreciated by my wife and myself.

Unfortunately, attendance at your function will not be possible owing to a prior engagement linked to an overseas project. Being released from this assignment is highly improbable.

It is our wish to offer you a suitable gift for this auspicious occasion. Your gift list was received with your invitation. After some deliberation it is our decision to send you the dinner set. It will be freighted to you within the next week. It is hoped that it meets your requirements.

It is our hope that your celebration is successful in every way.

Yours sincerely,

Tom and Sue Johnson

What's wrong?

Inappropriate tone — first names are always used with friends.

Part 1 — content OK but tone (vocabulary/style) too formal for a letter to a friend.

Part 2 — content relevant but tone (vocabulary/style) too formal, too impersonal for a letter to a friend.

Part 3 — content relevant but tone (vocabulary/style) too formal and too impersonal for a letter to a friend.

Again, too formal for a letter to a friend.

Too formal as an ending to a letter to a friend.

Using full name is too formal for a letter to a friend.



Appropriate tone

Hi Karen and Jim,

Thanks so much for the wedding invite. Sue and I were really knocked out to be asked to join you for the big day!

Very sadly, we won't be able to make it, because we'll still be tied up with that major project in Brussels, and I'm pretty sure we won't be able to get time off to come back just for a few days.

Of course, we'd really like to give you something special as a present to mark your super-important day! We've had a look at the gift list and after a great deal of thought, we've opted for the dinner set. We'll send it next week — hope you like it!

Hope, too, that the wedding goes brilliantly for you both.

All the very best,

Tom and Sue

4. Write your IELTS letter ‘in good faith’

Explanation

Some candidates find the task of writing an ‘unreal’ letter a little patronizing and occasionally make fun of the task by signing themselves ‘Mickey Mouse’, for example, at the end, or by deliberately creating an absurd or exaggerated situation in the letter as a sort of protest at the test situation. This is not a good idea!

Why is this important?

IELTS assessors are hired to do a job (assessing) with very strict guidelines and undertake stressful training and retraining programs. They take their work seriously as they realise they are often dealing with a key stage in people’s lives. If you sabotage the task you are indirectly insulting the integrity of the assessor.

5. Use a systematic structure

Explanation

Wherever possible, use a sentence explaining why you are writing the letter, then three body paragraphs followed by a concluding comment, with each body paragraph dealing with one of the three parts mentioned in the letter task.

Why is this important?

A well-organised and logically structured letter seems more planned and relevant, and makes the task of reading your letter much easier for the assessor. This has a strong and positive psychological impact on the assessor.

6. Select vocabulary which adds interest to your letter, and flags awareness of tone

Explanation

The writer of a high scoring letter is able to select vocabulary which indicates ability to avoid repetition, and an awareness of which words fit which type of letter and the type of relationship between writer and receiver.

Examples

Informal Letter

I'm fed up with my job

I can't make it to the party

This car you sold me is a lemon

This room is filthy and it stinks

Your kid is a spoilt brat

Formal Letter

My job is no longer sufficiently rewarding

I'm unable to attend the celebration

The car I purchased is mechanically unsound

The room needs cleaning and has an unpleasant odour

Your child seems somewhat over-indulged

Why is this important?

The ability to use a wide range of suitable vocabulary shows the assessor that you are pretty similar to an educated, native speaker, even if you still make a few grammatical errors. This invites a positive evaluation and makes the assessor feel comfortable. Creating psychological 'closeness' between you and the assessor is a good thing!

7. Don't neglect the beginning and ending of the letter

Explanation

Beginning and ending the letter appropriately shows a clear understanding of the appropriate level of formality.

Why is this important?

The assessor's final impression of you and your letter is formed as the letter finishes. If your ending is not appropriate it may affect the assessor's overall impression in a negative way.

Examples

Start your letter with '*Dear*'... + name of the person to whom you are writing – Mr/Ms + family name, for formal letters; **or** first name only, for friends. If you don't have the name of the person to whom you are writing, then just use 'Sir' or 'Madam' **e.g.**

Dear Mr. Jones/Dear Ms. Jones (**formal**)

Dear Jim/Dear Sally (**informal**)

Dear Sir/Madam

When writing your name **at the end** remember just to use your first name if you are writing to a friend, but use your full name if you are writing to an organization or to someone you don't know, **e.g.**

Yours faithfully,/Yours sincerely, James Jones/Sally Jones (**formal**)

All the best,/Best wishes, Jim/Sally (**less formal**)

8. Reduce simple grammar mistakes

Explanation

Simple grammar mistakes seem 'babyish' to the assessor, who generally expects you to have mastered basic grammar if you are trying to get a higher score.

Why is this important?

The assessor may think that you should have learnt basic grammar when you first learnt English. Too many basic errors reduce the natural 'feel' of your letter and invite a negative evaluation, even if the assessor can understand what your letter is communicating.

Reduce Weaknesses to Achieve a Higher Score

To maintain the good impression you've already created you need to reduce the kinds of weaknesses illustrated in these examples:

Weakness 1 — Word Forms Adjective/Noun/Adverb

Explanation

In simple terms, **errors that relate to basic rules of English grammar leave a more negative impression than other kinds of mistakes** because the assessor may assume that you learnt about these basic rules when you were younger and have had plenty of time to learn to use them correctly since that time.

Examples of mistakes that can reduce your score



Mistake

What's wrong?

I have a **complain** to make about your hotel

Noun form '**complaint**' needed

The room was not **space** enough

Adjective '**spacious**' needed

It is **obviously** that the room is **vacancy**

Adjectives '**obvious**' and '**vacant**' needed

Your hotel is **certain** overpriced

Adverb '**certainly**' needed

So, if you still make these basic errors you may give the impression of being like an **immature schoolchild**, even if your own native language causes you to make the errors because its verb system is much simpler than the English verb system, or its translated word forms are less varied than those in English. The assessor is guided to a rating by your writing and isn't influenced by such complexities as 'first language interference'. The IELTS test, remember, is based ultimately on comparing performance with a native English speaker equivalent.

Weakness 2 — Verb Tenses

Explanation

Accurate use of the verb system shows an awareness of how time is marked in English. This is important when writing letters that refer to events in the past, present and future.

Example



Letter with errors

I **hire** a car from your company last week. I **use** it every day until today without a problem. Unfortunately this morning, I **park** it in the car park at the shopping centre. While I was in the shop the driver of another car **has hit** the car but **doesn't leave** their address. I'd like to know if I **am having** to pay for this damage when I **returned** the car.



Corrected Letter

I **hired** a car from your company last week. I **have used** it every day until today without a problem. Unfortunately this morning, I **parked** it in the car park at the shopping centre. While I was in the shop the driver of another car **hit** the car but **didn't leave** their address. I'd like to know if I **will have** to pay for this damage when I **return** the car.

Weakness 3 — Subject/Verb Agreement

Explanation

Making the subject and verb agree is a basic aspect of English grammar. It is learnt at the beginner stage but a surprising number of IELTS candidates still make errors, and these create a poor impression.

Example



Incorrect

Does your holiday home **has** a garage? We like to park our car out of the sun as this **stop** the paint from getting damaged. Also we **doesn't like** mosquitoes so hope there aren't many around the house. Air conditioning **are** also important.



Correct

Does your holiday home **have** a garage? We like to park our car out of the sun as this **stops** the paint from getting damaged. Also we **don't like** mosquitoes so hope there aren't many around the house. Air conditioning **is** also important.

Weakness 4 — Run-on Sentences

Explanation

Run-on sentences indicate a lack of awareness of the importance of correct punctuation in showing the boundary between one sentence and another. Assessors get frustrated by this problem as it forces them to re-read sentences in order to make sense of them, and wastes time.

Example



Sentence without boundaries

I stayed at your hotel last week, it was not a pleasant experience and the room was too small I felt uncomfortable in such a small space.



Sentences ended by full stops

I stayed at your hotel last week. It was not a pleasant experience and the room was too small. As a result, I felt uncomfortable in such a small space.

Weakness 5 — Omissions from Sentences

Explanation

Perhaps because many learners of English are more comfortable speaking the language conversationally, written English is often 'telegraphed', which means words are left out but the meaning is still reasonably clear.

Example



Sentence with omissions

I am writing complain your hotel. I stayed two nights in April but service very poor. I'll give details my concerns.



Complete sentence

I am writing **to** complain **about** your hotel. I stayed **for** two nights in April but **the** service **was** very poor. I'll give **you some** details **regarding** my concerns.

Weakness 6 — Not Doing What the Task Asks You to Do

Explanation

The task instructions ask you to write 150 words and to include **three** features in your letter. If you omit one or more of these, or write under the minimum length, you will get a lower score.

Why is this important?

It is important not to lose marks unnecessarily. Failing to follow instructions would penalise even a native speaker of English who took the IELTS test.

Example

Task: A friend has invited you to their wedding. Write a letter to your friend:

- Thank your friend for the invitation (**Part 1**)
- Explain why you can't go (**Part 2**)
- Suggest one or two possible wedding presents you could send (**Part 3**)



Read this letter:

Dear Jim,

How are things with you? It seems ages since we were in contact. I bet you are getting excited about your wedding. Or scared?

Thanks very much for the wedding invitation. I'm really honoured that you and Judy have included me on your guest list, and the location sounds great. (**Part 1**)

Unfortunately, I'm afraid it will not be possible for me to come and support you both. I'll be overseas at that time working for my company, and because it is the final part of a key project, I'm not going to be allowed to leave. Of course, this is a major disappointment, but I don't have a choice, other than resignation, and that's a bit drastic. (**Part 2**)

Have a great time on your big day and all the very best for a wonderful future together,

Best wishes,

Tom

Comment – the letter omits Part 3 and is also underlength (135 words).

Weakness 7 — Writing a letter that isn't relevant

Explanation

You need to follow the type of information the task asks you to include, not create a new direction for the letter.

Why is this important?

Again, this lack of attention to instructions means that you don't read carefully enough.



Example (same task as in Weakness #6)

Dear Jim,

How are things with you? It seems ages since we were in contact. I bet you are getting excited about your wedding... or scared?

I can remember when Jill and I got married. What a day! It rained and the best man dropped the ring. My mother fainted at the reception and the plane for our honeymoon was cancelled because of bad weather. I hope you have better luck.

(Part 1 — not what the task asks for)

Unfortunately, I'm afraid it will not be possible for me to come and support you both. I'll be overseas at that time working for my company, and because it is the final part of a key project, I'm not going to be allowed to leave. Of course, this is a major disappointment, but I don't have a choice, other than resignation, and that's a bit drastic.

(Part 2 — OK)

I know you have everything already so I'm not going to send a present. Why don't you come and stay with us when you get back from your honeymoon. You know you're always welcome and we have loads of space in our new home.

(Part 3 — not really what the task asks for)

Have a great time on your big day and all the very best for a wonderful future together,

Best wishes,

Tom

Comment — the letter is well written and has an appropriate tone, but two paragraphs are not relevant to the stated task.

Weakness 8 — Being too repetitive

Explanation

A letter is an opportunity to show command of synonym and range of appropriate, formal or informal expression. Richness of vocabulary use gives your written style more 'personality' and this gives a stronger impression of you (the writer) to your assessor. Being over-repetitive reduces the colour and texture of your letter.

Why is this important?

Varied use of high-level expressions is rewarded in a higher score for vocabulary, but appropriateness is important so avoid word-for-word translation or use of idioms unless you are really confident about if and when they are currently used.

Example



Repetitive version

I can't come to your wedding because I'll be working. It is the last part of a big project, and I can't leave. I'm sad because I can't come, but I can't choose to come and I can't lose my job, because that's too big a thing for me to do.



Improved version

Unfortunately, I'm afraid it will not be possible for me to come and support you both. I'll be overseas at that time working for my company, and because it is the final part of a key project, I'm not going to be allowed to leave. Of course, this is a major disappointment, but I don't have a choice, other than resignation, and that's a bit drastic.

Comment: over-repetition of 'can't', 'come'; insufficient range of vocabulary use; too many simple, general words like 'big', 'thing'.

Weakness 9... NO, We're sure you've had enough.....for NOW!



WRITING TASK 1 FITNESS ACTIVITIES

Before you start

These fitness activities build awareness of key elements of different Task 1 letters.

Work through each section, noting the aspects of the letter being focused on.

When you are practising a Task 1 letter under exam conditions, try asking yourself similar questions as part of **managing and improving your written response**.

Since you are probably reading this e-book on a computer or mobile device, it would be best to get some paper to write your answers on.

TYPE 1 TASK » Letter to a Friend (Informal)

Task Question

You are going away travelling for the summer. You want a friend to look after your home while you are away.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter,

- **say where you are going**
- **describe your home**
- **explain some of the things your friend must do to look after your house**

Write at least 150 words.

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

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear _____,

Fitness Activities 1–14 (for TYPE 1 Sample Letter)



Activities 1–3 will help you plan your letter:

- 1 How many main areas will the assessor expect you to talk about in your letter?
 - a) 2
 - b) 4
 - c) 3

- 2 Can you include some less formal expressions because you are writing to a friend?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

- 3 What is the central purpose of your letter?
 - a) to make sure your friend knows what to do while you are away
 - b) to talk about what your house looks like
 - c) to describe your trip.



Activities 4–6 refer to Paragraph 1 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 1

How's it going? I've just booked my ticket to Paris, and will be leaving on January 15th. I'll be studying French cinema for the whole summer. I'm really excited.

- 4 Note how many different verb tenses are used just in the opening paragraph! Match these verb tenses with the correct verb forms from the letter.

Present continuous (progressive)	I've just booked
Present perfect	I'm ...excited
Future continuous	How's it going?
Present simple	I'll be studying

- 5 **The writer starts with an informal greeting, 'How's it going?' Which two of these other greetings would also suit this type of letter?**
- How do you do?
 - Are you in good health?
 - How are things with you?
 - How are you doing these days?
- 6 **The writer intensifies the final sentence by using 'really', as in 'I'm really excited' Which of these adverbs could NOT be used in the same way?**
- very
 - usually
 - so
 - totally



Activities 7–8 refer to Paragraph 2 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 2

As you know, I'd like you to look after my place while I'm away. Because you hadn't been to this apartment before, I'll just tell you a bit about that. Well, it's on the ground floor of a small group of apartments. It has a large kitchen/diner and a lounge area. There are two bedrooms and balcony with a great view of the bay.

- 7 **Which phrases or expressions in Paragraph 2 could these replace?**
- take care of
 - As you may recall
 - a little
 - flat
 - when
 - which has

8 **Correct these three expressions from Paragraph 2:**

I'll just tell you a bit about that
 Because you hadn't been to this apartment
 There are two bedroom and balcony



Activities 9–12 refer to Paragraph 3 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 3

Line

- 1 The apartment is pretty easy to look after. You'll need to keep it clean, of course.
- 2 Also I have loads of rare plants on the balcony, which will need watering. My cat,
- 3 Ebony, will also need feeding, but you can let him out in the evenings. Oh yes, one last
- 4 thing. You'll need to pick up my mail, and email me details of any important phone
- 5 messages.

9 **How many different tasks will Jim need to carry out while Susan is away?**

- a) 4
- b) 5
- c) 6

10 **The verb 'need' is perhaps used a little too often in this paragraph. Which of these two verbs a) 'require' and b) 'have to' could be used in the four places where 'need' is used?**

Line 1 _____
 Line 2 _____
 Line 3 _____
 Line 4 _____

Which verb is perhaps too formal in a letter to a friend, 'require' or 'have to'?

11 Why does the writer (Susan) use the expression, 'Oh yes'?

- a) She's agreeing with Jim
- b) She has just remembered another thing
- c) She is excited

12 Which more informal expressions are used in Paragraph 3 in preference to these?

quite _____
 many _____
 collect _____
 task _____



Activities 13–14 refer to the Ending of the sample letter:

Ending the letter

Hope all this is going to be manageable for you.

See you soon,

Susan

13 Which of these phrases is more formal: a) or b)?

- 1 a) I hope these tasks will be manageable
 b) Hope all this is going to be manageable

- 2 a) See you soon
 b) I'll see you in the near future

14 Which two of these letter endings would be as appropriate as 'See you soon'?

- a) All the best for now
- b) Yours
- c) I'll be in touch again soon
- d) Yours truly

Complete Sample Letter

Now read the complete, corrected sample letter:



Dear Jim,

How's it going? I've just booked my ticket to Paris, and will be leaving on January 15th. I'll be studying French cinema for the whole summer. I'm really excited.

As you know I'd like you to look after my place while I'm away. You haven't been to this apartment so I'll just tell you a bit about it. Well, it's on the ground floor of a small group of apartments. It has a large kitchen/diner and a lounge area. There are two bedrooms and a balcony with a great view of the bay.

The apartment is pretty easy to look after. You'll need to keep it clean, of course. Also I have loads of rare plants on the balcony which will need watering. My cat, Ebony, will also need feeding, but you can let him out in the evenings. Oh yes, one last thing. You'll need to pick up my mail, and email me details of any important phone messages.

Hope all this is going to be manageable for you.

See you soon,

Susan

(173 words)



Note: To reduce time pressure for Task 2, it's always a good idea to try to restrict your word total for Task 1 to about 170 words.



Well done! You're now at the end of Fitness Type 1.
Take a little break. Go and make some tea, maybe?

TYPE 2 TASK » Letter to Someone You Don't Know (Formal)

Task Question

A charity organization you recently phoned regarding voluntary work with elderly people has asked you to support your application.

Write a letter to the charity organization. In the letter,

- explain why your personality is suitable
- describe any practical skills you have
- indicate times and days you are available

Write at least 150 words.

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

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Fitness Activities 1–16 (for TYPE 2 Sample Letter)



Activities 1–2 will help you plan your letter:

1 The best tone for this letter is:

- a) informative and polite
- b) light and friendly
- c) cold and business-like

2 The writer's main purpose is to:

- a) give lots of information
- b) convince the organization of their suitability
- c) show enthusiasm



Activities 3–6 refer to Paragraph 1 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 1

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further to my telephone call of 15th February, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to support and amplify my application to undertake voluntary work with your organization.

3 Which one of these expressions could replace 'Further to...'?

- a) After
- b) Following
- c) With
- d) Later

4 What does 'this opportunity' refer to?

- a) the chance of volunteering
- b) the chance to write the letter
- c) the chance of a job
- d) the chance to phone

5 Which three expressions in Paragraph 1 could these words replace?

- a) develop
- b) carry out
- c) build upon

6 Why is this sentence not suitable for use in Paragraph 1?

'Thanks for the chance to say some more about myself and to show you I'm the right guy to do volunteer work with you.'

- a) It's too informal
- b) It's not relevant
- c) It's not polite
- d) It's grammatically incorrect



Activities 7–9 refer to Paragraph 2 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 2

In terms of my suitability, I think it is fair to say that I am a sensitive and conscientious young man. In addition to that I am told that I am very patient, sociable and a good listener. All of these qualities should be helpful when actively supporting elderly people.

- 7 Which two of these expressions could be used instead of ‘In terms of...’**
- a) Regarding
 - b) About
 - c) Talking of
 - d) With regard to
 - e) Subject to
- 8 Why does the writer put, ‘I think it is fair to say that I am...’ and ‘I am told that I am...’ instead of just the simpler ‘I am...’? Choose the best TWO possibilities.**
- a) He wants to sound definite
 - b) He is not sure of himself
 - c) He wants to sound more reasonable
 - d) He doesn’t want the reader to think he is conceited
- 9 Which three of these personal qualities are not helpful if working with the elderly?**
- a) tolerance
 - b) diffidence
 - c) empathy
 - d) diplomacy
 - e) indolence
 - f) diligence
 - g) callousness



Activities 10–12 refer to Paragraph 3 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 3

I possess a wide range of useful, practical skills. For instance, I can carry out light repairs to household items, maintain gardens and renovate rooms. I am also experienced at ironing and cleaning. Furthermore, I am a proficient pianist.

10 In formal letter writing tasks, higher level expressions enhance the quality of vocabulary. Which higher level expressions in Paragraph 3 are used in preference to these 'ordinary' alternatives?

Ordinary words	Higher level expressions used
'have'	_____
'do'	_____
'do up'	_____
'good at'	_____
'good'	_____

11 Which three adjectives make his skills sound more positive, and thus strengthen his application?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

12 Which sentence-connecting expressions does the writer use to join his various skills fluently and logically?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____



Activities 13–14 refer to Paragraph 4 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 4

With respect to availability, I am free on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays most weeks, but only in the afternoons and evenings. When my university terms end I am usually available also on other days.

13 Which are the correct prepositions to use with time expressions?

Write in the correct prepositions:

I am available this month ___ Friday 12th ___ the morning ___ 10 o'clock, but ___ April I'll be overseas. I think I last saw you ___ 2011.

14 Singular or plural? Why does the writer prefer use of plurals, as in 'Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays most weeks', & 'afternoons and evenings'?



Activities 15–16 refer to the Ending of the sample letter:

Ending the letter

I'll look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

John Grant

- 15 Which one of these options suitably captures the same tone as, 'I'll look forward to hearing from you,'?**
- a) It'll be great to hear from you
 - b) Your response will be much appreciated
 - c) Can't wait for your reply
 - d) Looking forward to getting an answer
- 16 Which one of these options is the most suitable, formal ending to this type of letter?**
- a) Sincerely yours
 - b) Yours
 - c) Yours faithfully
 - d) Yours hopefully

Complete Sample Letter

Now read the complete, corrected sample letter:



Dear Sir or Madam,

Further to my phone call of 15th February, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to support and amplify my application to undertake voluntary work with your organization.

In terms of my suitability, I think it is fair to say that I am a sensitive and conscientious young man. In addition to that I am very patient, sociable and a good listener. All of these qualities should be helpful when actively supporting elderly people.

I possess a wide range of useful, practical skills. For instance, I can carry out light repairs to household items, maintain gardens and renovate rooms. I am also experienced at ironing and cleaning. Furthermore, I am a proficient pianist.

With respect to availability, I am free on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays most weeks, but only in the afternoons and evenings. When my university terms end I am usually available also on other days.

I'll look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

John Grant

(158 words)



Good job! You've made it to the end of Fitness Type 2.
Still in good shape? We hope so!
You're well on the road to IELTS success!

TYPE 3 TASK » Letter to Someone You Know a Little (Semi-formal)

Task Question

Your neighbour has a dog that is noisy at night. You can't sleep.

Write a letter to your neighbour. In your letter,

- describe the problem with the dog
- explain why it is important for you to sleep
- outline what your neighbour could do about the situation

Write at least 150 words.

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

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear _____,

Fitness Activities 1–13 (for TYPE 3 Sample Letter)



Activity 1 will help you plan your letter:

1 What is the best tone to use in this type of letter?

- a) polite and reasonable
- b) friendly and warm
- c) cold and annoyed

What type of language best helps the tone you chose?

- a) very formal
- b) informal
- c) semi formal



Activities 2–5 refer to Paragraph 1 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 1

I am your neighbour, Julia Swanson. I'm sorry to be writing to you in this way, but I have to complain about the behaviour of your dog. Because you work until very late at night, you may not realise that your dog barks constantly from about 9pm until you return. Unfortunately, this is making it impossible for me to get to sleep.

2 The purpose of the first sentence is to:

- a) Say who is writing
- b) Establish the writer's full name formally
- c) Offer a greeting

3 The purpose of this paragraph is to:

- a) Explain the problem gently
- b) Explain the problem angrily
- c) Complain strongly

4 Find two expressions in this paragraph which give it a more polite tone.

- a) _____
- b) _____

5 In the final sentence what does the word 'this' refer to?

- a) the neighbour's job
- b) the dog barking
- c) the neighbour's late return



Activities 6–8 refer to Paragraph 2 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 2

It is really important for me to sleep properly as I have not been well recently and need to have plenty of rest. I go to bed early but even with my earplugs I cannot get to sleep for several hours because of your dog. My doctor says that this will prevent me from recovering effectively.

6 Find four adverbs in Paragraph 2, write them below.

Note: adverbs often end in **-ly**

In what way do these adverbs help the paragraph to communicate well?

- a) They increase precision and emphasis
- b) They make the paragraph more polite
- c) They make the paragraph more powerful

7 Which words in the paragraph could these adverbs replace?

'soundly' could replace _____

'extremely' could replace _____

'lately' could replace _____

'fully' could replace _____

8 Using 'this' in the final sentence helps economy and fluency in the final part of the letter. What does 'this' refer to?

- a) lack of sleep
- b) the dog
- c) the illness



Activities 9–11 refer to Paragraph 3 of the sample letter:

Paragraph 3

I would like to suggest that you keep your dog inside the house while you are at work so that the barking is less noticeable. Alternatively, you could perhaps drop your dog off at a friend's house on your way to work.

9 Rate these expressions in order of politeness (1 = most polite; 4 = least polite)

	Rating
Please keep your dog inside the house	_____
I would like to suggest that you keep your dog inside the house	_____
You must keep your dog in the house	_____
Keep your dog inside the house, OK!	_____

10 The verb form 'drop...off' is used in Paragraph 3 to create more informality. Which TWO of these informal verbal expressions formed with 'drop' mean to 'visit'?

- a) drop off
- b) drop in
- c) drop out
- d) drop round

11 Linking within sentences is important. Complete these two sentences in your own words:

Example: ..keep your dog inside the house **so that** the barking is less noticeable

Eat fewer biscuits **so that** you _____

You should study hard **so that** you _____



Activities 12–13 refer to the Ending of the sample letter:

Ending the letter

I'd be grateful for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Julia

12 The writer (Julia) uses 'I'd be grateful for your cooperation' because...

- a) She wants politely to encourage the neighbour to accept her suggestion
- b) She wants to thank the man for helping her

13 'Yours sincerely' in this letter could be replaced most suitably by which TWO of the options a–d?

- a) Warmest wishes
- b) Yours faithfully
- c) Yours
- d) All the very best

Complete Sample Letter

Now read the complete, corrected sample letter:



Dear Mr. Johnson,

I am your neighbour, Julia Swanson. I'm sorry to be writing to you in this way, but I have to complain about the behaviour of your dog. Because you work until very late at night, you may not realise that your dog barks constantly from about 9pm until you return. Unfortunately, this is making it impossible for me to get to sleep.

It is really important for me to sleep properly as I have not been well recently and need to have plenty of rest. I go to bed early but even with my earplugs I cannot get to sleep for several hours because of your dog. My doctor says that this will prevent me from recovering effectively.

I would like to suggest that you keep your dog inside the house while you are at work so that the barking is less noticeable. Alternatively, you could perhaps drop your dog off at a friend's house on your way to work.

I'd be grateful for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Swanson

(169 words)



We're here again! Congratulations on completing Fitness Type 3! Great job. IELTS success is within your reach!

WRITING LESSON – Task 2 Essay

First Questions Answered

Q. What kind of task will I be given?

A. For Task 2 you will be given a task prompt, usually on a social issue, and asked to write a response in the form of a short, 250-word essay.

Q. What types of task prompt are there?

A. These are the **four** main types of Task 2 prompt:



Type 1 — Indicate and Support Your Level of Agreement

In a Type 1 essay task you are required to agree, partly agree or disagree with a stated point of view.

Sample task:

“Meeting someone for the first time through the internet is never a good idea. Do you agree?”

How to build your answer

Introduction: Introduce the task issue and say whether or not you agree.

Paragraph 1: Discuss the point of view which is opposite from your own (e.g. if you agree, explain reasons why others might not agree or only partly agree).

Paragraph 2: Give the main supporting point in favor of your view, and provide relevant examples.

Note: If you fully agree/disagree - go to **Paragraph 3**; if you only partly agree, proceed to **Conclusion** and summarise your partial agreement there.

Paragraph 3: **[Optional]** Give a secondary supporting point in favor of your view, provide relevant examples.

Conclusion: Summarise what you have said (without too much repetition).



Type 2 — Present a Two-sided Discussion

In a Type 2 essay task you are required to discuss 2 sides of an argument or 2 points of view, and explain which one they personally agree (or partly agree) with and why.

Sample task:

*“Some say you should always marry for love; others say that in an uncertain world it’s wiser to marry for money.
Discuss both points of view and give your own opinion.”*

How to build your answer

Introduction: Introduce the task issue and say what your own opinion is.

Paragraph 1: Discuss one side of the argument **briefly** + supporting examples.

Paragraph 2: Discuss the other side of the argument briefly + supporting examples.

Paragraph 3: Give your own view and explain briefly why you hold that view.

Conclusion: Summarise what you have said (without too much repetition).



Type 3 — Discuss Advantages & Disadvantages

In a Type 3 essay task you are required to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a given situation or viewpoint.

Sample task:

*“In some countries older people are being encouraged to work longer and not to retire.
Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working beyond retirement age.”*

How to build your answer

Introduction: Introduce the task issue, say what you will address in your answer.

Paragraph 1: Discuss advantages with supporting examples.

Paragraph 2: Discuss disadvantages with supporting examples.

Conclusion: Summarise what you have said (without too much repetition).



Type 4 — Explain & Offer Solutions or Consequences

In a Type 4 essay task you need to explain the reasons why the situation in the task prompt has arisen, and how it can be solved, or what consequences it gives rise to.

Sample task:

“Family life is suffering because of the pressure of work. Why is this happening? What is the most important way to improve the quality of family life?”

How to build your answer

Introduction: Introduce the task issue, say what you will address in your answer.

Paragraph 1: Answer the first question in the task prompt with supporting examples.

Paragraph 2: Answer the second question in the task prompt with supporting examples.

Conclusion: Summarise what you have said (without too much repetition).

Q. What do I have to do to respond well to the question?

A. Your task is to:

- Develop your essay’s point of view clearly.
- Write a well-organised, well structured answer in clear paragraphs each with a clear central topic (i.e. a main idea for you to discuss in each paragraph).
- Write legibly and neatly, minimize crossing out.
- Include ideas or information which are relevant, and not repetitive.
- Write accurately and clearly with a variety of grammatical structures and linking words.
- Use a good range of appropriate, formal vocabulary (not just general words).
- Avoid copying or repeating too many words, or expressions, especially from the task wording.

Q. How long do I have to complete Task 2?

A. You have about 40 minutes for this task and must write at least 250 words.

Q. How can I be sure to use the time wisely?

A. As we suggested for Task 1, you should practise before the test in order to establish a systematic routine, like this one:

What you should do:	How?	Why?
Stage 1 – understand the task clearly	By studying the wording for one to two minutes, especially the task type and central ideas	To guarantee relevance of your plan and clear structure of the answer and your viewpoint
Stage 2 – plan your answer for about two to three minutes	Build ideas linked to your own view and response type, establish paragraph structure	To organise your ideas into relevant paragraphs; to ensure clarity of answer
Stage 3 – write a systematic answer neatly and with clear paragraphing	By following your plan for about 30-35 minutes.	To make your answer look organized, well structured, clear, and easier to read
Stage 4 – check your work quickly	By skim reading; quick word count by counting number of words in one line and then multiply by number of lines (e.g. 10 words x 25 lines = 250)	To pick up any obvious mistakes

Q. Is 30-35 minutes enough time to write 250 words?

A. Yes, with practice.

Practise writing answers to Task 2 questions with a 40-minute limit. Get used to following the pattern above. Gradually you will be able to do it, and will feel a sense of reduced panic and more effective management of this task. It may also be useful to try one or two complete Writing tests within the official, one-hour, time limit so that you learn to combine the writing and time management patterns you have learnt for each task.



GOLD STAR ADVICE No. 1:

Planning time saves writing time by making writing time structured and managed.

Q. What is a 'clock victim' and why should I avoid becoming one?

A. Some candidates spend too much time counting words or watching the clock and lose connection and focus with the actual task. Practise doing Task 2 questions until you have developed a reliable routine.

Remember, being organised is important because you can then create an organised answer. A relevant, organised answer impresses the assessor because it seems professional even if it still has some vocabulary and grammar weaknesses.

What if I...? Some Problem Situations

Q. What if I don't really understand the issue being described in the task?

A. Most candidates understand at least something. So:

- a) Focus on those words or ideas that you can understand.
- b) Try to guess the meaning of the other parts by using the known words and your own general knowledge of the topic.

Q. What if I can't think of enough ideas?

A. Keep to your planned structure. Sometimes fresh ideas come to your mind as you write.

Alternatively, try to think of other examples to support the ideas you do have.

Avoid repeating your ideas if possible; build the other sections a little more (such as the Introduction and Conclusion)

Q. What if I copy most of the words from the task question in my Introduction?

A. If you copy 'word for word' from the task question when you start, then you risk having these words excluded from your essay's total word count. In addition, the first impression you give the assessor will show your limitations.

Solution: try to paraphrase words in the task to show you have flexibility and to increase the word count of your essay.

Q. What if I don't know how to write formal, essay-style English very well?

A. **Before** the test, do the fitness activities and study the IELTS Writing Doctor in this textbook, pages 137 and 187. These have useful sections on how to:

- focus on topic sentences for each paragraph,
- build vocabulary which is appropriate to essay styles, and
- build awareness of how to link sentences to develop your viewpoint.

Q. What if I am only half way through and already out of time?

A. This probably means either:

- that you haven't organised and planned your **overall answer** enough before writing,
- or that you spent too long on Task 1 and didn't follow a time management strategy to cover the whole writing test,
- or that your language level is low and it takes you a long time to think of and/or express ideas clearly in English.

In a real test you may have no options, but, before taking the test again:

- Practise answering Task 2 topics under strict, 40-minute time conditions to learn how to maximize the way you manage the time, and how you balance the time given to each section of the essay.
- Practise making quick plans (two to three minutes) so that the overall structure of your answer, and your main ideas are clear—this saves time later and helps you to relax.
- Learn to use one or two useful expressions which help you to start your answer or to structure paragraphs.

Examples

To start an essay you could use:

'The problem/issue of _____ is a complex one, but one which is receiving more attention. This essay will suggest that _____'



Note: be careful to make the standard of the English in the rest of your response at about the same level as any formulaic phrases.

To start a paragraph:

'One reason why _____ is that _____', or
'There are two main reasons why _____. The first is that _____'

To start a conclusion:

'To summarise, this essay has come to the conclusion that _____'

If the problem is caused by anxiety, then being organized is the best solution. Panic can be caused by a lack of willingness to take responsibility for the situation you are in, when you suddenly have no one to help you. This requires better management of the situation. Planning and organization help you to take more control of how you feel inside this stressful situation.

Q. What if writing just one or two paragraphs takes me close to 250 words?

A. This usually means that you haven't balanced your planned essay structure well enough or haven't had enough practice before the test.

Before writing, you needed to look more carefully at the task, and balance the number of ideas before writing. Remember there is not time to write in too much detail, or to include too many ideas. It's important to complete the essay with a well-balanced paragraph structure. Try to remember at all times that you are communicating with the assessor, not writing to yourself.

Q. What if I make a mistake, how do I fix it?

A. If the mistake involves **lack of relevance** at paragraph level, cross out the paragraph neatly with one diagonal line, and write a more relevant one. If it is a major mistake, such as totally **misunderstanding** the task and realizing your mistake only after writing a paragraph or two, cross out the first attempt with a diagonal line, then miss a line and start again but with a tighter plan to avoid too much detail. Aim to write at least 240 words in the time remaining. Don't panic, because you will probably be able to write more easily once you have realized your mistake.

Q. What if I feel so anxious that my mind goes blank?

A. Stay as calm as you can. This is an opportunity to manage your emotions and become stronger. Follow this 'calming routine': close your eyes and breathe systematically for one minute. To do this:

- count 'one and two and three and four' in your head when you breathe in,
- then hold your breath counting from one to four again,
- and then breathe out counting once more from one to four in your head.

After one minute, return to the question, and make every action systematic and structured. You have to manage panic and not let it control you. This one-minute 'calming routine' is not time wasted but **time managed!**

Secrets of How to Impress Your Assessor in Writing Task 2

As we noted earlier when discussing Task 1, your assessor is a busy person with perhaps 20 Writing tests to score. Usually Task 2 is marked after Task 1. Perhaps yours is the last one so the assessor may be a little tired. Within the limitations of your English, you need to create a positive relationship with the assessor through the quality of your writing.



GOLD STAR ADVICE No 2: *Your Writing is YOU.*

Everything you write and how you present your writing represents 'YOU' in the mind of the assessor because you will not meet that assessor in person.

Q. How can I show the assessor that my writing is worth a higher score?

A. There are ways to write a Task 2 essay response that always create a good impression. A few of these have been mentioned briefly already, but read these more detailed guidelines.

Follow these detailed suggestions and your work will be appreciated by your assessor:

1. Take care with the layout and appearance of your essay

Explanation

A handwritten piece of writing, even a formal essay, is always a personal reflection of 'YOU' so you need to take particular care with its layout and appearance, even if you feel under time pressure. Avoid crossing out words too often and make your handwriting crisp and neat. Leave a line between each paragraph, so that the essay's structure is very clear. You are trying to make the assessor's job easier, remember!

Why is this important?

As this is the assessor's very first impression of your management of the task, you need to communicate a positive feeling of competence and care.

2. Try to make your point of view and the direction and structure of your essay clear in the introductory paragraph

Explanation

In Western, essay writing, the Introduction often serves not just to introduce the topic but also to signal the writer's intentions or point of view (For example – whether you agree with the topic statement or not and what you are going to discuss).

Why is this important?

If the assessor knows right at the beginning what your opinion and plan is, then this helps in three important ways:

- a) It makes you appear well-organised (appearing to be a good essay manager is a good first impression).
- b) It enables your reader (the assessor) to predict the likely direction of your essay – this helps the reading to go more smoothly (unless you don't do what you said you were going to do).
- c) It forces you to be systematic and relevant in structuring the remainder of the essay.

3. Establish an appropriate level of formality in your essay response

Explanation

The use of language in any written communication reflects the relationship between writer and the **context** of writing (this means the situation in which the writing takes place and the expectations of the person who is to receive it).

Why is this important?

The assessor, who is usually a native speaker, has been deeply immersed since childhood in the culture, and, more specifically, in the education system in which English is used, and is therefore highly developed in terms of the subtle choices and uses of language needed for different purposes when writing.

You should try to build some of these features into your writing to create formality:

- Choose formal vocabulary mostly as this seems more professional to the reader.
- Avoid using clichés, short forms and abbreviations.
- Avoid repetition and over-use of basic verbs like 'is', 'has', 'makes', 'gets', 'does'.
- Vary your use of linking expressions.
For instance, instead of writing 'For example' all the time, you can write, 'One example of this is....', or 'This is clearly illustrated in....'.
- Enrich your display of vocabulary by using adjectives or other expressions to create greater strength in your written 'voice', as in:
'One effect of this is...' → 'One **striking** effect of this is...';
'This will lead to...' → '**Clearly**, this will lead to...';
'In contrast to this is...' → 'In **sharp** contrast to this is....'.
- Reduce the use of personal pronouns where possible, by using 'it...' constructions, as in:
'It seems reasonable to suggest that...' (instead of 'I think that...'), or
'It is education that is the key to preventing extremism' (instead of 'I believe that education is the best way of stopping extremism').
- Use noun groups instead of lengthy imprecise formulations, as in:
'There is currently an intensification of **mature age unemployment**' (rather than,
'Now there are many old workers and they don't have jobs and this is getting worse').

To summarise — your task is to try to match the assessor's expectations (as made explicit in the assessment criteria for Writing Tasks) as well as you can. Many younger test takers tend to read less formal English and often feel more comfortable when they speak English. This often limits their vocabulary and reduces their awareness of how to use sentence building to develop and link ideas. The essay produced may then seem immature if it is too 'chatty' or too simplistic, or repetitive in style.

4. Make sure you develop a clear point of view

Explanation

Some candidates can write generally about the task topic but find it difficult to establish a clear point of view or a clear conclusion in terms of their own point of view. This is often related to a lack of experience in either thinking about or discussing social issues, or different cultural thinking styles.

Why is this important?

The clearer your point of view is to your IELTS assessor the better the relationship between writer and reader is in this type of writing. The assessor will be impressed if you are definite about what your standpoint is, even if your overall view is that you are 'undecided'.

5. Use a systematic, paragraph structure

Explanation

The use of clear paragraphs, each with a clear function or a clear central topic (idea) is one of the foundations of clear essay writing. It is a well-established convention in academic writing.

Why is this important?

A well-organised and logically developed essay helps to structure your thinking and at the same time structures the reader's understanding of the point of view you are seeking to develop and support. It reduces 'scatter' of ideas (meaning, when a writer just adds one idea after another, like a shopping list without establishing any link to previous ideas or any support via development, explanation or exemplification of ideas).

6. Reduce simple grammar mistakes

Explanation

Simple grammar mistakes may seem a little 'babyish' to the assessor, who generally expects you to have mastered basic grammar if you are trying to get a higher score.

Why is this important?

The assessor may think that you should have learnt basic grammar when you first learnt English. Too many basic errors in your Task 2 response reduce the natural flow of your essay for the reader, reduce the sense of maturity in your viewpoints, and leave a negative impression, even if the assessor can understand what your essay is communicating.

7. Use modal forms or 'cautious language' to express views on complex issues

Explanation

Even if your point of view is clear, social issues are complex and it is therefore difficult to be 100% certain about anything.

Example



Sentence 1

Family life is terrible today because work is full of stress and working hours are too long



Sentence 2

For an increasing number of people family life nowadays seems to be deteriorating, perhaps, in part, because hours of work and levels of stress in many jobs appear to be increasing

Comment: The assessor may think that Sentence 1 is a little too strong and simplistic because it is very general and talks about the situation (family life) as if it is 100% fact (use of 'is' and 'are' generally sound factual). Sentence 2 offers a more considered and cautious formulation, and generates more words.

Why is this important?

The tone of your writing forms part of the relationship you form with the reader. Tone in writing is similar to spoken voice tone. If you speak in a flat tone you may appear bored or sad (and perhaps boring to the person you are speaking to); if your voice has a mix of high and low tones you sound more 'alive', more interesting, warmer. If you write in a tone that seems too confident, too sure, without any caution when discussing complex social issues then you may seem unreasonable, conceited, even naïve or crude in your thinking, even if this is caused by lack of ability in English to write in a different way!

8. Use formal vocabulary to build range and give a more 'serious' tone to your essay

Explanation

The writer of a high scoring Task 2 response is able to select vocabulary which indicates ability both to avoid repetition and demonstrate awareness of which words fit the topic and a formal type of essay writing in this context.

Example



Informal approach

Family life is really bad today

People work too long

Jobs have a lot of stress

Something must be done about it

Government should stop all this or there'll be a really bad situation

They should do something now



Formal approach

Family life seems to be deteriorating currently

Working hours seem to be excessive

Some occupations seem to be generating increasing levels of stress

Action is required to tackle this problem

The government needs to take preventive measures in order to avoid a social disaster

Immediate action seems important

Why is this important?

The ability to draw flexibly on a wider range of appropriate vocabulary convinces the assessor that you share similarities with a native speaker, even if there are still a few grammatical errors. This builds a positive impression and strengthens the psychological comfort that the assessor feels in relation to you (through your writing). Psychological closeness is good.

9. Use appropriate idioms occasionally to enrich vocabulary

Explanation

Occasional idioms or less usual vocabulary extend the range and add to the 'colour' and 'personality' of your writing (so long as they are added sparingly and appropriately).

Example



Conversational style

The government must do something about this problem

Teenage kids and parents often get annoyed with each other



Idiomatic alternative

The government must **grasp the nettle** in terms of this issue

Parents and teenage children rarely **see things eye to eye**

It is better to avoid idioms or sayings that seem clichéd and are just used formulaically or inappropriately, rather than in the service of the ideas being expressed.

It's also **not a good idea** to:

- translate idioms from your own language into English, or
- use idioms unless you are really confident that they are currently used, and confident about precisely when and how they are used.

Avoid these over-used idioms or sayings:

'Every coin has two sides'

'To put it in a nutshell'

'Rome wasn't built in a day'

Why is this important?

Although the basic tone of an essay is formal, in the IELTS Task 2 there is room to be occasionally less formal, through use of appropriate idiom (as opposed to just simple conversational forms). This shows the assessor you have a greater range of options in your choices of expression. However, it must seem natural, not forced.

10. Use connectors and referencing pronouns to show relationship between your ideas

Explanation

Ideas need to be connected using appropriate connecting expressions to help the reader follow the way you are building the explanations of your ideas and developing your point of view.

Example



Paragraph 1 No connectors

Marrying for money is rarely a good idea. Money leads to lack of feeling. People live in sadness. They are comfortable, of course. Being comfortable is not enough. People also need to feel loved.



Paragraph 2 Good use of connectors

Marrying for money is rarely a good idea **because this** may lead to a lack of feeling and **ultimately** the couple may live together in sadness, **even though** they are comfortable. **This type** of comfort is, **however**, not enough **since** people also need to feel loved.

Why is this important?

The use of connecting expressions helps the reader and seems more mature. It also provides the reader with a better sense of your 'voice' as a writer.

11. Try not to be too repetitive

Explanation

Being repetitive shows your limitations as a writer in two main ways:

- a) It indicates limitations in the range of ideas.
- b) It indicates limitations in the flexibility and range of your vocabulary and grammar.

Why is this important?

Your principal goal is to achieve the highest score you can in IELTS. To do this you need to show flexibility and variety in terms of ideas, vocabulary and grammatical use.

Reduce Weaknesses to Achieve a Higher Score

To maintain the good impression you've already created you need to reduce the kinds of language weaknesses illustrated in these examples:

Weakness 1 — Word Forms (Adjective/Noun/Adverb)

In simple terms, **errors that relate to basic rules of English grammar leave a more negative impression than other kinds of mistakes** because the assessor may assume that you learnt about these basic rules when you were young and have had plenty of time to learn to use them correctly since that time.

Examples of mistakes that can reduce your score



Mistake

What's wrong?

It is **real** unwise to meet on the Internet

Adverb form '**really**' needed

Marrying for love is always **appropriately**

Adjective '**appropriate**' needed

It is **obviously** that family life is **importance**

Adjectives '**obvious**' and '**important**' needed

Work stress is **certain** a major problem

Adverb '**certainly**' needed

So, if you still make these basic errors you may give the impression of being like an **immature schoolchild**, even if your own native language causes you to make the errors because its verb system is much simpler than the English verb system, or its translated word forms are less varied than those in English. The assessor is guided to a rating by your writing and isn't influenced by such complexities as 'first language interference'. The IELTS test, remember, is based ultimately on comparing performance with a native English speaker equivalent.

Weakness 2 — Verb Tenses

Explanation

Accurate use of the verb system shows an awareness of how time is marked in English. This is important when writing an essay.

Example



Incorrect tenses

In the past, family life **is** more important because most people **live** in the countryside and spent more time together, working on the land. In more recent times, the nature of work **is changed**. People nowadays **living** in cities, and **are travel** away from home to work. In the future, this trend **is changing**.



Correct tenses

In the past, family life **was** more important because most people **lived** in the countryside and spent more time together, working on the land. In more recent times, the nature of work **has changed**. People nowadays **live** in cities, and **travel** away from home to work. In the future, this trend **will change**.

Weakness 3 — Subject/Verb Agreement

Explanation

Making the subject and verb agree is a basic aspect of English grammar. It is learnt at the beginner stage but a surprising number of IELTS candidates still make errors, and these may reduce your score.

Example



Incorrect

Couples who wants to get married should put love first. If **they doesn't** feel love, then their **life together are** going to be unhappy. **Everyone need someone who love** them. As a child it is your parents, but when you are an adult your **partner become** that person.



Correct

Couples who want to get married should put love first. If **they don't** feel love, then their **life together is** going to be unhappy. **Everyone needs someone who loves** them. As a child it is your parents, but when you are an adult your **partner becomes** that person.

Weakness 4 – Run-on Sentences

Explanation

Run-on sentences indicate a lack of awareness of the importance of correct punctuation in showing the boundary between one sentence and another. Assessors get frustrated by this problem as it forces them to re-read sentences in order to make sense of them, and wastes time.

Example



Run-on sentence

Stressful jobs affect psychological health, they reduce energy and motivation as a result, performance is negatively affected.



Improved sentence

Stressful jobs affect psychological health. They reduce energy and motivation. As a result, performance is negatively affected.

Weakness 5 – Omissions from Sentences

Explanation

Perhaps because many learners of English are more comfortable speaking the language conversationally, written English is often 'telegraphed', which means words are left out but the meaning is still reasonably clear.

Example



With omissions

One advantage working past retirement age is that keeps you mentally sharp. Those retire early often bored at home. Their brains slow their reactions also slow and results in depression.



Improved version

One advantage **of** working past retirement age is that **it** keeps you mentally sharp. Those **who** retire early **are** often bored at home. Their brains slow, their reactions also slow, and **this** results in depression.

Weakness 6... NO, We're sure you've had enough.....for NOW!



WRITING TASK 2 FITNESS ACTIVITIES

Before you start

The fitness activities in this section offer you quick practice at the different task types you may encounter in the IELTS Writing test. It's also a chance to use some of the tips from the Writing chapter earlier in our book.

With the help of these fitness activities you will build awareness of key elements of different Task 2 essays. Work through each section, noting the different aspects of the essay being focused on. When you are practising a Task 2 essay under exam conditions, try asking yourself similar questions as part of **managing and improving your written response**.

Since you are probably reading this e-book on a computer or mobile device, it would be best to get some paper to write your answers on.

TASK TYPE 1 » Indicate and Support Your Level of Agreement

Task Question

**Shopping is dangerous because it makes people selfish, and careless with money.
Do you agree or disagree?**

Write at least 250 words.

Fitness Activities 1–25 for Task Type 1



Activities 1–2 will help you to understand what kind of response is required.

- 1 'Do you agree or disagree?' means that you need to:
 - a) choose and defend one of these views (Yes, I agree OR No, I don't agree) based on the nature of your own viewpoint.
 - b) write to show you both agree and disagree equally.
 - c) do what you like as long as you talk about shopping.

2 The key word in the task wording that communicates you should write in support of only one view is:

- a) money b) because c) or



Activities 3–5 will help you to plan your answer.

3 How many paragraphs will work well in this type of essay?

- a) 4 (Introduction, 2 body paragraphs, Conclusion).
 b) 5 (Introduction, 3 body paragraphs, Conclusion).
 c) 3 (Introduction, 1 body paragraph, Conclusion).

4 What's the best thing to do next?

- a) Start writing.
 b) Write down some key ideas to support and oppose your viewpoint.
 c) Decide on your viewpoint and then write down some ideas.

5 What's a reasonable, approximate number of sentences to aim for in the Introduction?

- a) 2–3 sentences b) 3–5 sentences c) 6–7 sentences



Activities 6–10 will help you to build the Introduction.

6 Look at the Introduction paragraph. What's the main purpose of the first sentence?

- a) To start by talking generally about the overall topic of shopping
 b) To stop the opinion sentence (2) from being the first one.
 c) To raise the topic of shopping and make a 'bridge' into the writer's point of view.

Introduction

Shopping has become a popular leisure activity in many countries in the developed world, but it has hidden risks. This essay **will suggest** that it is indeed dangerous and **is likely to** make consumers more self-centred and less disciplined with their money.

7 Which **two** of these expressions could suitably replace 'will suggest' in Activity 6?

- a) will argue b) will say c) will report d) is of the opinion

8 'is likely to' is a useful phrase in Task 2 essays as it carries more caution than the expression 'will' when making predictions about complex problems. Make more cautious predictions by using 'likely' to complete these positive and negative sentences:

- a) Shopping will grow in popularity. Shopping is _____
 b) Shopping will never die out. Shopping is not _____
 c) Overspending will cause problems. Overspending is _____
 d) Shopping will never bring happiness. It is highly un_____ that _____

9 Which synonyms are used in the Introduction in Activity 6 to avoid copying these three words from the task wording?

- people _____
 selfish _____
 careless _____

10 How could you complete these phrases with 'make' so that even with a different verb the meaning doesn't really change very much?

- a) Shoppers are selfish.
 Shopping makes _____
- b) Consumers are dangerous when they go shopping.
 Shopping makes _____
- c) People spend unwisely at the shops.
 Shopping makes _____
- d) Shoppers lack self discipline.
 Shopping makes _____



Activities 11–12 will help you to build Body Paragraph 1.

11 Look at Body Paragraph 1.

What purpose does the topic sentence (first sentence) achieve?

- a) It enables the writer to establish that not all shoppers are rich.
- b) It enables the writer briefly to discuss his central point of view.
- c) It establishes that there is a point of view that is different from the writer's.

Body Paragraph 1

Not all shoppers are poor money managers. As costs and bills are increasing constantly, many families have developed excellent **financial skills, enabling them** to pay their bills and shop fairly for every family member. There are also **financial advisers available** to help develop such skills.

12 The writer economises in the building of sentences in this paragraph.

Complete the same sentences using these equally effective ways.

- a) Many families have developed excellent financial skills which _____.
- b) There are also financial advisers, who _____.



Activities 13–16 will help you to build Body Paragraph 2.

13 What is the central idea in the topic sentence (first sentence) which will be developed in Body Paragraph 2?

- a) selfishness
- b) reasons
- c) advertising

Body Paragraph 2

Advertising is one of the key reasons why people think more selfishly. Many adverts depict glamorous lives where certain products are shown as essential to a sense of being successful, attractive or fashionable. Ordinary consumers are persuaded at a psychological level by advertisers and made to feel inadequate if they don't have products such as cosmetics, brand name goods, new shoes or cars. This creates willing shoppers who put their desire for personal appearance and wellbeing above their sense of community welfare.

14 A useful sentence construction for explaining something in an IELTS Task 2 is: ' _____ is one of the key reasons why _____'. Complete these sentences in an appropriate way:

- a) The desire for a good job is one of the key reasons why _____
- b) The wish for a more exciting life is one of the principal reasons why _____
- c) The hope for more money is one of the major reasons why _____
- d) _____ is one of the main reasons why marriage is still popular.

15 Using advanced vocabulary appropriately helps to raise IELTS level. Which words in Body Paragraph 2 (Activity 13) are used instead of these simpler options?

Simpler option	More advanced expression in Body Paragraph 2
show (verb)	_____
wish (noun)	_____
look (noun)	_____
shoppers	_____
feeling good	_____
not good enough	_____
goods	_____
social good	_____

16 There are quite a few adjectives in this paragraph. In which two ways do they most help the IELTS candidate's performance?

- a) They add variety and interest.
- b) They enable the writer to show greater range of vocabulary use.
- c) They help build the viewpoint.



Activities 17–21 will help you to build Body Paragraph 3.

17 It's helpful to have options when judging the degree to which something has changed.

Example in Body Paragraph 3: 'far less cautious')

Complete these sentences with 'less' or 'more':

- a) Most teenagers read **considerably** _____ than they did in the past.
- b) Women are **far** _____ intelligent than men (You choose!)
- c) Airline fares are **much** _____ expensive nowadays.
- d) IELTS is **considerably** _____ popular than it used to be.

Body Paragraph 3

The advent of the credit card has encouraged consumers to be **far less** cautious about their money. Credit cards are part of the 'cashless society', in which more and more transactions don't require actual cash. **The result is that money becomes** more abstract and, via constantly increasing credit limits, consumers can pretend to have money that they don't actually possess, and can buy things that they want immediately, but before they have really earned the money to pay for them. **This** often results in having to face constant debt and to a sense of life being lived 'here and now' rather than linked to building a stable future.

18 A useful phrase for IELTS Task 2 is, 'The result is that...'

Which of a, b, c and d could NOT appropriately replace it in Body Paragraph 3?

- a) As a consequence, money becomes...
- b) This results in money becoming...
- c) An outcome of this is that money becomes...
- d) Money becomes a result that...

19 How many sentences are there in Body Paragraph 3? Guess before checking.

- a) 6 b) 8 c) 4

20 'This...' is a helpful referencing word as it prevents the need to repeat an already-used long phrase. What does 'this' in Body Paragraph 3 refer back to?

- a) earning money
- b) buying things immediately
- c) pretending to have money

21 Evaluate these effects of long sentences as either + (Positive) or – (Negative)

- a) Long sentences can aid reading flow as the writer's ideas are connected more fluently (+ / –)
- b) Long sentences put extra pressure on memory (+ / –)
- c) Long sentences show more flexible use of connecting expressions (+ / –)
- d) Long sentences may reduce clarity of ideas (+ / –)

Review the length and clarity of your own sentences when you practise Task 2.

**Activities 22–24 will help you to build the Conclusion.****22 The purpose of this Conclusion seems to be:**

- a) to summarise the point of view.
- b) to offer some new information.
- c) to give the opposite point of view.

Conclusion

All in all then, shopping has become all too tempting for many consumers, who want to feel good and feel rewarded perhaps for their ever-busier working lives. Advertising feeds this desire and credit cards feed instant gratification. The results **may well be** harmful for families and for society.

23 The writer adds expressions to intensify the evaluation of shopping and work. Find the expressions and write them here:

_____ tempting _____ - _____ working lives

Now put these expressions into the sentences below

all too ever-growing far too never-ending ever busier

- a) It is _____ easy to spend money, and _____ difficult to save it.
- b) Internet crime is an _____ problem.
- c) Working lives are becoming _____.
- d) There seems to be a _____ rise in the price of food.

24 Using cautious language like ‘may well be’ instead of ‘will be’ makes opinions in an essay of this type seem more reasonable.

Which three of these expressions are also cautious and could replace ‘may well be’?

- a) will definitely be...
- b) could easily be...
- c) might well be...
- d) can't fail but be...
- e) may turn out to be...

25 Now complete your own essay in 40 minutes without looking at the sample essay.

Use the 5-paragraph structure and make sure that each body paragraph has a clear topic sentence (that is, a first sentence which establishes the topic to be developed in the remainder of the paragraph).

Now read this complete sample answer:

Shopping has become a popular leisure activity in many countries in the developed world. **This essay will suggest that** it is indeed dangerous and is likely to make consumers more selfish and less disciplined with their money.

Not all shoppers are poor money managers. As costs and bills increase constantly, many families have developed excellent financial skills enabling them to pay their bills and shop fairly for every family member. There are also financial advisers available to help develop such skills.

Advertising is, however, one of the key reasons why people think more selfishly. Many adverts depict glamorous lives where certain products are shown as essential to a sense of being successful, attractive or fashionable. Ordinary consumers are persuaded at a psychological level by advertisers and made to feel inadequate if they don't have products such as cosmetics, brand name goods, new shoes or cars. This creates willing shoppers who put their desire for personal appearance and wellbeing above their sense of community welfare.

The advent of the credit card has encouraged consumers to be far less cautious about their money. Credit cards are part of the 'cashless society', in which more and more transactions don't require actual cash. The result is that money becomes more abstract and, via constantly increasing credit limits, consumers can pretend to have money that they don't actually possess, and can buy things that they want immediately, but before they have really earned the money to pay for them. This often results in having to face constant debt and to a sense of life being lived 'here and now' rather than linked to building a stable future.

All in all then, shopping has become all too tempting for many consumers, who want to feel good and feel rewarded perhaps for their ever-busier working lives. Advertising feeds this desire and credit cards feed instant gratification. The results may well be harmful for families and for society.



Note: This sample answer is **not** a model answer but only one of many, possible responses to the task question. It would probably be awarded Band 9.

TASK TYPE 2 » Present a Two-sided Discussion

Task Question

Some say you should always marry for love; others say that in an uncertain world it is wiser to marry for money.

Discuss both points of view and give your own opinion.

Write at least 250 words.

Fitness Activities 1–20 for Task Type 2



Activities 1–3 will help you to understand what kind of response is required.

1 This type of essay requires you to:

- a) choose one point of view only.
- b) give your own opinion on both points of view.
- c) talk about both points of view neutrally, then give your own personal view.

2 The main topic is:

- a) marriage as an institution
- b) the basis of marriage
- c) links between love and money

3 The points of view for discussion are:

- a) whether you should only get married because you love someone or whether you should only get married for financial advantage.
- b) whether it's more sensible to get married for love or more sensible to marry for financial benefit given the modern world's uncertainties.



Activities 4–5 will help you to plan your answer.

4 How many paragraphs seems the most logical for this type of essay?

- a) 5 b) 4 c) 6

5 What's the best thing to do next?

- a) Decide which part of the essay will go into which paragraph.
 b) Note some key ideas for the main paragraphs.
 c) Write the introduction.



Activities 6–8 will help you to build the Introduction.

Introduction

The issue of love and marriage has been part of most cultures for centuries. With economic uncertainties, pure romance is under challenge, but can still find a way to maintain its vital place in marriage.

6 Read this introduction and choose a, b or c.

The Introduction:

- a) introduces the topic and hints at the writer's own opinion.
 b) talks generally but doesn't hint at the writer's own opinion.
 c) focuses on historical and economic facts.

7 In IELTS writing, candidates sometimes struggle to write economically. Which shorter phrases in the Introduction are more economical than a) and b)?

- a) Some people have jobs but don't have a trust in the future of their jobs or their money.

Shorter phrase in the Introduction: _____

- b) True and real love has got many things which are trying to make it weaker.

Shorter phrase in the Introduction: _____

8 Choose the best expression to complete a-d using either 'topic', 'issue' or 'problem'.

- a) Poverty is a _____ facing many nations.
- b) Whether or not to have children is an important _____ these days.
- c) Beauty is a frequently discussed _____.
- d) Climate change is one of the most serious _____ in the world today.



Activities 9–12 will help you to build Body Paragraph 1.

Read Body Paragraph 1 before trying the activities that follow.

Body Paragraph 1

Most couples in western societies **would claim that** they still marry for love. **This is because** they are usually free to choose a life partner. Love provides a strong emotional bond between men and women, and continues into adulthood the strong feelings that most children receive from their parents. **It is well known that** a strong marriage based on love gives each partner the strength, stability and emotional security to pursue their careers with confidence. Lonely, unloved individuals, **often seem to** struggle more in every part of their lives.

9 Verb forms that are less direct often seem more mature and considered. Compare:

'Most couples would claim that they marry for love' with

'Most couples marry for love'

The first sentence in Body Paragraph 1 seems to hint that the situation is not so simple. Which **three** of these verb expressions would achieve the same effect in that first sentence?

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Most couples... | a) want to get... |
| | b) clearly want to believe... |
| | c) only get married... |
| | d) are probably convinced... |
| | e) would no doubt assert... |

- 10 'This is because...' is a very useful expression and helps the writer give a confident explanation which links to the previous sentence neatly.

Match sentence 1 with its appropriate sentence 2:

Sentence 1

Sentence 2

a) Many women today marry later.

i) **This is because** neither partner can always have their own way

b) The number of divorces is rising.

ii) **This is because** many couples want celebrity-style weddings.

c) Getting married is now very expensive.

iii) **This is because** they want to build their careers first, just like men do.

d) Marriage involves compromise

iv) **This is because** couples get bored too easily and lack commitment.

- 11 'It is well known that...' helps a writer to claim a general truth.

Example: It is well known that a strong marriage based on love gives each partner...'

Write your own ending to complete these sentences in a suitable way:

a) It is well known that women _____.

b) It is well known that celebrities _____.

c) It is well known that divorce _____.

- 12 'often seem(s)' instead of a simple verb stops the writer appearing too assertive.

Compare:

'Lonely individuals struggle more in their lives' **with**

'Lonely individuals often seem to struggle more in their lives'

Change these verb forms using 'often seem':

a) Men are less committed to marriage than women.

b) Women are more romantic than men.

c) Couples today struggle to keep their marriage alive.

d) A child knows when parents are not happy.



Activities 13–15 will help you to build Body Paragraph 2.
Read Body Paragraph 2 before trying the activities that follow.

Body Paragraph 2

At the same time **it cannot be denied that** economic realities have made everyone more practical. Seeking a partner who has good **career prospects** is a wise and sensible thing to do as it provides a better basis for economic stability within a family. So **it is quite likely that** the modern marriage may unconsciously be based on both love and money, in the sense that a suitable person to fall in love with may tend to be someone with a well-paid job.

13 Writers often use an introductory phrase to strengthen their viewpoint.

Example: 'It cannot be denied that economic realities have made everyone more practical.'

Add your own viewpoint about marriage to these introductory phrases:

- a) It cannot be denied that _____.
- b) It is certainly the case that _____.
- c) There is little doubt that _____.
- d) It is undeniable that _____.

14 Using noun + noun is a way to communicate information economically.

Example: 'Prospects of having a career' = 'career prospects'.

Put these phrases into a neat, noun + noun form:

- a) A cake eaten at a wedding = _____.
- b) A ceremony in which you get married = _____.
- c) Your partner in marriage = _____.
- d) An opportunity to get a job = _____.

15 Expressing degrees of probability is helpful when making a prediction in writing.

Example: '...it is quite likely that the modern marriage may...'

Arrange these predictions from the most likely (1) to the least likely (4):

- a) It is highly likely that _____
- b) It is very unlikely that _____
- c) It is quite likely that _____
- d) There is little likelihood that _____



**Activities 16–18 will help you to build Body Paragraph 3.
Read Body Paragraph 3 before trying the activities that follow.**

Body Paragraph 3

My own view is that love should, as they say, ‘conquer all’. Without love we, as human beings, are lost to ourselves and lost to others. **Most surveys show that happiness is based on** strong, positive relationships **not on** wealth. Marriage should be based on a strong, emotional relationship **so that** children will grow up being loved, and the cycle of love can continue.

16 It is useful to draw on supporting evidence.

Example: ‘Most surveys show that...’

Which of these phrases seem similar in meaning to the example from Body Paragraph 3?

- a) Much research evidence indicates that...
- b) I have a viewpoint which shows that...
- c) Most of the evidence points to the fact that...
- d) I really believe that...

17 It is often useful to make a contrasting point economically.

Example: ‘Love is based on respect, not on wealth’

Choose expressions from the box to complete these sentences:

proximity	commitment	taste	reputation	infatuation	nutrition
-----------	------------	-------	------------	-------------	-----------

- a) Marriage should be **based on** _____, **not on** _____.
- b) Choosing a university should be **based on** _____, **not on** _____.
- c) A good diet should be **based on** _____, **not on** _____.

18 Using 'so that' to express purpose is effective in formal writing.

Example: 'Marriage exists so that children can grow up in a stable family'

Complete these complex sentences of purpose with your own ideas

- a) Children go to school **so that** they can_____.
- b) Couples get married **so that** they can_____.
- c) Young married couples save **so that** they can _____.



Activity 19 will help you to build the Conclusion.

19 Which 3 expressions below could replace 'To summarise,...' ?

- a) All in all b) Finally c) After all d) To sum up e) Lastly f) Summing up

Conclusion

To summarise, marriage is under pressure from the individual's desire for financial security, but ultimately love is still the key to a happy, married life.

20 Now complete your own essay in 40 minutes without looking at the sample essay.

Use the 5-paragraph structure and make sure that each body paragraph has a clear topic sentence (that is, a first sentence which establishes the topic to be developed in the remainder of the paragraph).

Now read this complete sample answer:

The issue of love and marriage has been part of most cultures for centuries. With economic uncertainties, pure romance is under challenge, but can still find a way to maintain its vital place in marriage.

Most couples in western societies would claim that they still marry for love. This is because they are usually free to choose a life partner. Love provides a strong emotional bond between men and women, and continues into adulthood the strong feelings that most children receive from their parents. It is well known that a strong marriage based on love gives each partner the strength, stability and emotional security to pursue their careers with confidence. Lonely, unloved individuals, often seem to struggle more in every part of their lives.

At the same time it cannot be denied that economic realities have made everyone more practical. Seeking a partner who has good career prospects is a wise and sensible thing to do as it provides a better basis for economic stability within a family. So it is quite likely that the modern marriage may unconsciously be based on both love and money, in the sense that a suitable person to fall in love with may tend to be someone with a well-paid job.

My own view is that love should, as they say, 'conquer all'. Without love we, as human beings, are lost to ourselves and lost to others. Most surveys show that happiness is based on strong, positive relationships not on wealth. Marriage should be based on a strong emotional relationship so that children will grow up being loved, and the cycle of love can continue.

To summarise, marriage is under pressure from the individual's desire for financial security, but ultimately love is still the key to a happy, married life.



Note: This sample answer is **not** a model answer but only one of many, possible responses to the task question. It would probably be awarded Band 9.



You've now completed fitness activities for two task types. Well done. Now go and get married! ...Only joking!
Get a cup of tea... much easier!

TASK TYPE 3 » Discuss Advantages & Disadvantages

Task Question

In some countries older people are being encouraged to work longer and not to retire.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of working beyond retirement age.

Write at least 250 words.

Fitness Activities 1–10 for Task Type 3



Activity 1 will help you to understand what kind of response is required.

1 In this type of essay you need to:

- a) discuss advantages only.
- b) discuss both advantages and disadvantages.
- c) discuss disadvantages only, if you think there are no advantages.



Activity 2 will help you to plan your answer.

2 What number of paragraphs seems the most logical for this type of essay?

- a) 3
- b) 5
- c) 4



Activity 3 will help you to build the Introduction.
Read the Introduction before trying Activity 3 that follows.

Introduction

The retirement age is no longer fixed in many societies. Some workers prefer to delay retirement as long as possible; others choose to leave while still relatively young. There are pros and cons of prolonging work past retirement age.

3 Good paraphrasing of the task wording is viewed positively by the assessor.
Find the wording that paraphrases:

- a) advantages and disadvantages _____
 b) working beyond _____



Activities 4–5 will help you to build Body Paragraph 1.
Read Body Paragraph 1 before trying the activities that follow.

Body Paragraph 1

Some benefit can be easily identified. One clear advantage of delaying retirement is that it enable the maintenance of well-established daily routines. With age regularity seem to become more important psychologically and physically. A second benefit is that most work provide opportunities for social contact with groups and individual. Again, this is beneficial to a sense of wellbeing and usefulness.

4 It is usually a good idea to put all your advantages in one paragraph.
How many different advantages are there in Body Paragraph 1?

- a) 1 b) 3 c) 2

5 The missing 's'. This writer has started to make a few simple errors. There are five words in the Body Paragraph 1 that need an 's'. Write them correctly below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



**Activities 6–8 will help you to build Body Paragraph 2.
Read Body Paragraph 2 before trying the activities that follow.**

Body Paragraph 2

On other hand, working past retirement age is not always a good thing. Physically, full time job can be demanding especially these days, and workers of retirement age are starting to lose their physical strength. Secondly, after forty or more years of work, there is less time remaining to pursue those activities and trips for which there was never enough time. Many retired people, for example, undertake ambitious trips worldwide, while they are still healthy. Finally, staying on past retirement potentially robs younger workers of opportunities for promotion, or may prevent young workers from actually entering workforce.

- 6 Body Paragraph 2 has more ideas than Body Paragraph 1. How many disadvantages can you find? How many of them are supported by examples?**

Disadvantages: a) 5 b) 4 c) 3
Supporting example(s): a) 1 b) 2 c) 3

- 7 'a' and 'the'. The writer has missed two uses of 'the' and one use of 'a'.
Can you find them? Write the complete forms here:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- 8 The writer chooses some good quality vocabulary to move beyond simple words.
Which words does the writer use instead of these simpler possibilities?**

a) hard _____
b) left _____
c) go on _____
d) stop _____

**Activity 9 will help you to build the Conclusion.**

9 What does this conclusion achieve? Choose a, b or c:

- a) It repeats all the main advantages and disadvantages.
- b) It briefly summarises a key point from each paragraph.
- c) It offers some new ideas.

Conclusion

Summing up, working past retirement is good for continuity of daily routines but shortens the time available for exciting activities and pursuits during years when health problems may not have surfaced.

10 Now complete your own essay in 40 minutes without looking at the sample essay. Use the 4-paragraph structure and make sure that each body paragraph has a clear topic sentence (that is, a first sentence which establishes the topic to be developed in the remainder of the paragraph).

Now read this complete sample answer:

The retirement age is no longer fixed in many societies. As a consequence some workers now prefer to delay retirement as long as possible; others, however, choose to leave while they are still relatively young. There are pros and cons of prolonging work past retirement age.

Some benefits can be easily identified. One clear advantage of delaying retirement is that it enables the maintenance of well-established routines. With age, regularity seems to become more important psychologically and physically. A second benefit is that most work **provide**s opportunities for social contact with groups and individuals. Again, this is beneficial to a sense of wellbeing and usefulness. Lastly, working for longer enables greater time to build more savings for the post-retirement period. As living costs increase constantly, financial security is vital.

On ^{the} **other** hand, working past retirement age is not always a good thing. Physically, a **full time job** can be demanding especially these days, and workers of retirement age are starting to lose their physical strength. Secondly, after forty or more years of work, there is less time remaining to pursue those activities and trips for which there was never enough time. Many retired people, for example, undertake ambitious trips worldwide, while they are still healthy. Finally, staying on past retirement potentially robs younger workers of opportunities for promotion, or may prevent young workers from actually entering ^{the} **workforce**.

Summing up, working past retirement is good for continuity of daily routines but shortens the time available for exciting leisure activities and pursuits during years when health problems may not yet have surfaced.



Note: This sample answer is **not** a model answer but only one of many, possible responses to the task question. It would probably be awarded Band 8.5 (**grammar** slightly below Band 9).

TASK TYPE 4 » Explain & Offer Solutions or Consequences

Task Question

Family life is suffering because of the pressure of work.

Why is this happening?

What is the most important way to improve the quality of family life?"

Write at least 250 words.

Fitness Activities 1–8 for Task Type 4



Activity 1 will help you to understand what kind of response is required.

1 In this task type you should:

- a) Say whether you agree or not with the first statement.
- b) Explain why the situation exists, and what to do to make the situation better.
- c) Talk about ways in which work pressure is increasing and how to improve this problem.



Activities 2–3 will help you to plan your answer.

2 How many paragraphs should you aim for between the Introduction and the Conclusion?

- a) 3 b) 1 c) 2

- 3 **Imagine you are answering this question.**
Write down some ideas under these two headings:

Why is family life suffering?	Most important way to improve family life



Activity 4 will help you to build the Introduction.
Read the Introduction before trying Activity 4 that follows.

Introduction

In many countries both husbands and wives work full time. Unfortunately, this sometimes means that they have less time to spend with their children and may have to put even very young children into care. This essay will seek to offer reasons for this phenomenon and suggest the key to making family life better.

- 4 **The writer avoids copying words from the task too closely. Which phrases replace these from the task question?**

In the task question

In the Introduction

a) to say why this is happening

b) the most important way to improve the quality of family life



**Activity 5 will help you to build Body Paragraph 1.
Read Body Paragraph 1 before trying Activity 5 that follows.**

Body Paragraph 1

There is a range of reasons why the deterioration in family life can be linked to the work situation. **In the first place**, employers are becoming **so** cost conscious **that** they reduce their workforces as much as they can to reduce costs. **Consequently**, the other workers then may have to work longer hours to cover an increased workload. **Similarly**, workers often feel pressure to get better qualifications in order to remain employable. **As a result**, they enrol for part-time courses which then have to be completed in their leisure time, **thus** robbing them of valuable hours with their children. **Finally**, it seems that work is speeding up. **In other words**, electronic technology saves time in some ways, but increases management's expectations of what employees can be expected to achieve within a working day. **This can mean that** workers have to take work home in order to keep up. **Taken together**, such issues build pressure at home and families spend less time together.

5 Linking expressions. Match each linking expression on the left with one from Body Paragraph 1 on the right that has a similar meaning or function.

Alternative expressions

- a) First of all,...
- b) Lastly,...
- c) All in all...
- d) So...
- e) In the same way,...
- f) Thereby...
- g) Putting it another way,...
- h) The result of this is that...
- i) such that...
- j) This can lead to a situation in which...

Expressions from Body Paragraph 1

- In other words
- Taken together
- This can mean that
- In the first place
- Consequently
- Similarly
- so.... that
- As a result
- Finally
- thus



Activity 6 will help you to build Body Paragraph 2. Read Body Paragraph 2 before trying Activity 6 that follows.

Paragraph 2

Line

1 There is only one real key to changing the situation. This would involve a big change
 2 in social values such that the family and the upbringing of children would be viewed
 3 by governments and companies as the biggest social task. Then, work practices and
 4 government policies would be built around this good value. As a result workers would
 5 be protected and given good time for the big role of socialisation and the building of
 6 strong, loving and good relationships with their children.

6 Improve the level of the vocabulary. The writer has missed an opportunity here to lift the level of vocabulary. Which basic words in the paragraph could these replace?

Alternative higher level expression	Word and line number in Body Paragraph 2
a) fundamental	_____
b) most significant	_____
c) vital	_____
d) sufficient	_____
e) empathetic	_____



Activities 7–8 will help you to build the Conclusion.

7 Using ‘this’ in essays is a good way of making connections economically as a writer. What do the following uses in the Conclusion refer back to?

‘...and **this** is reducing shared family time’

a) What is reducing shared family time? _____

‘A major change in social values is the key to changing **this situation**’.

b) What is the situation? _____

Conclusion

To conclude, economic pressures are leading to harder and longer work and **this** is reducing shared family time. A major change in social values is the key to changing **this situation**.

8 Write a conclusion of your own to this essay in this box. Try to use only two or three sentences.

Now read this complete sample answer:

In many countries both husbands and wives work full time. Unfortunately, this sometimes means that they have less time to spend with their children and may have to put even very young children into care. This essay will seek to offer reasons for this phenomenon and suggest the key to making family life better.

There is a range of reasons why the deterioration in family life can be linked to the work situation. In the first place, employers are becoming so cost conscious that they reduce their workforces as much as they can to reduce costs. Consequently, the other workers then may have to work longer hours to cover an increased workload. Similarly, workers often feel pressure to get better qualifications in order to remain employable. As a result, they enrol for part-time courses which then have to be completed in their leisure time, thus robbing them of valuable hours with their children. Finally, it seems that work is speeding up. In other words, electronic technology saves time in some ways, but increases management's expectations of what employees can be expected to achieve within a working day. This can mean that workers have to take work home in order to keep up. Taken together, such issues build pressure at home and families spend less time together.

There is only one real key to changing the situation. This would involve a **big** change in social values such that the family and the upbringing of children would be viewed by governments and companies as the **biggest** social task. Then, work practices and government policies would be built around this **good** value. As a result workers would be protected and given **good** time for the **big** role of socialisation and the building of strong, loving and **good** relationships with their children.

To conclude, economic pressures are leading to harder and longer work and this is reducing shared family time. A major change in social values is the key to changing this situation.



Note: This sample answer is **not** a model answer but only one of many, possible responses to the task question. It would probably be awarded Band 8.5 (**vocabulary** slightly lower than Band 9).



You should now go and write some Task 2 essays under test conditions! On second thoughts, go and have a nice hot bath or some strawberries, or both! Do some more practice later!

WRITING TASK 1 – RATED SAMPLE

As you may know, IELTS writing task 1s are marked using band descriptors in four categories: **Task Achievement, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy**. You can find the publicly available performance descriptors on the official IELTS website: www.ielts.org.

Task Question

You are going away travelling for the summer. A friend is going to look after your house while you are away.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter,

- **say where are you going**
- **describe your house**
- **explain some of the things your friend must do to look after your house**

Write at least 150 words.

The sample answer that follows was written by an IELTS candidate. It has been analysed to help you understand what score it might be awarded in each category and some reasons why.

Analysing Task Achievement

Dear Jen,

I'm going off for vacation in Australia for the summer. I really need someone to look after my house and I hope that you could do me a favor. I will travel to Perth for one week and please take care of my house when I'm abroad.

As you know my house is located at Centre Villa. There are only a few houses there, therefore it is easy to spot my house. My house is number 22, Lot 7 with orange color paint and grey wooden gate. You will notice there are a lot of trees surrounding my house. It is the only house with bright color painting which is very noticeable.

While I'm away from home, I wish that you could help me to take care of my cats – Papai and Babai. I will get ready the canned cat food and you easily find it in the kitchen. Please remember to switch on the light in the evening as I'm worry that it might attract thieves if the house is too dark.

I'm happy for your help. I'll enjoy my holiday and of course I won't forget to buy you some souvenir as a return of your hard work to take care of my house.

See you soon,

*With love
Jessie*

Analysis: This letter follows the task requirements quite well by including all three, required parts of the letter but perhaps the first part (the destination of the holiday) is insufficiently developed. The purpose of the letter is reasonably clear from the first paragraph. The style and tone of the letter seem suitable for a written communication between two friends.

Impression score for Task Achievement: This letter seems to be between 6 and 7 level.

Analysing Coherence and Cohesion

Dear Jen,

I'm going off for vacation in Australia for the summer. [?] I really need someone to look after my house [and] I hope that you could do me a favor. I will travel to travel to Perth for one week [and] please take care of my house [when] I'm abroad.

[As you know] my house is located at Centre Villa. There are only a few houses there, [therefore] it is easy to spot my house. My house is number 22, Lot 7 with orange color paint and grey wooden gate. You will notice there are a lot of trees surrounding my house. It is the only house with bright color painting [which] is very noticeable.

[While] I'm away from home, I wish that you could help me to take care of my cats – Papai and Babai. I will get ready the canned cat food and you easily find it in the kitchen. Please remember to switch on the light in the evening [as] I'm worry that it might attract thieves [if] the house is too dark.

I'm happy for your help. I'll enjoy my holiday [and of course] I won't forget to buy you some souvenir as a return of your hard work to take care of my house.

See you soon,

With love
Jessie



Note: Brackets [] show the connecting expressions.

Analysis: Most connecting expressions are appropriate but one is not ('and' in line 2), and one linking word is needed ([?] in line 1). Coherence is concerned with the effectiveness of what the essay is trying to communicate. The letter is clear and structured into clear paragraphs. The use of references (words like 'it' or 'this') is rather limited, especially in paragraph 2 so the result is a little too much repetition (of words like 'house' for example). Topic sentences (that is, the first sentence in the paragraph which serves to establish what the paragraph will talk about) are reasonably effective. As is often the case with informal letter writing, use of formal connecting expressions is less prominent, and less required cohesively. The candidate uses cohesion effectively but occasionally misses opportunities to aid flow by more extensive use. Using short sentences reduces a sense of friendliness.

Impression score for Coherence and Cohesion: This letter seems to be between 6 and 7.

Analysing Lexical Resource

Dear Jen,

I'm going off for vacation in Australia for the summer. I really need someone to look after my house and I hope that you could do me a **flavor (#1)**. I will travel to travel to Perth for one week [and] please take care of my house when I'm abroad.

As you **know (#2)** my house is located at Centre Villa. There are only a few houses there, therefore it is easy to spot my house. My house is number 22, Lot 7 with orange color paint and grey wooden gate. You will notice there are a lot of trees surrounding my house. It is the only house with bright color painting [which] is very noticeable.

While I'm away from home, **I wish (#3)** that you could help me to take care of my cats – Papai and Babai. I will get ready the canned cat food and you easily find it in the kitchen. Please remember to switch on the light in the evening as I'm worry that it might attract thieves if the house is too dark.

I'm happy (#4) for your help. I'll enjoy my holiday and of course I won't forget to buy you some souvenir as a return of your hard work to take care of my house.

See you soon,

With love
Jessie



Note: '# (+ number)' is used to mark each vocabulary item that seems faulty or inappropriate.

Analysis: As can be seen from the small number of vocabulary problems, this area of writing is quite effective. There is occasional idiomatic use, as in 'spot' and many words are appropriate choices for a letter to a friend.

Impression score for Lexical Resource: Possibly 7.

(See suggested corrections on the next page)

Corrections

#	Explanation of problem	More appropriate forms
1	Simple misspelling (with an amusing result!)	'favour' or 'favor'
2	This is not really a lexical issue, but the omission of the comma ',' after 'know' creates a strange and confusing effect	'As you know, my house....'
3	This is not the appropriate word choice here, as 'wish' suggests something that is unlikely to be fulfilled (more like a dream)	'I'm hoping...'
4	'I'm happy' describes a state but here we need to suggest a stronger sense of the hypothetical	'I'd be grateful for...' 'It would be great if you could help me out.' (<i>less formal</i>)

Analysing Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Dear Jen,

I'm going off **for vacation (#1) in Australia (#2)** for the summer. I really need someone to look after my house **and I hope (#3)** that you could do me a favor. I **will travel (#4) to travel (#5)** to Perth for one week **and (#6)** please take care of my house **when (#7)** I'm abroad.

As you know my house is located at Centre Villa. There are only a few houses there, **therefore (#8)** it is easy to spot my house. My house is number 22, Lot 7 with orange **color (#9)** paint and **grey (#10)** wooden gate. You will notice there are a lot of trees surrounding my house. It is the only house with **bright color painting (#11)** which is very noticeable.

While I'm away from home, I wish that you could help me to take care of my cats – Papai and Babai. I will get **ready the canned cat food (#12)** and **you easily find (#13)** it in the kitchen. Please remember to switch on the light in the evening as **I'm worry (#14)** that it might attract thieves if the house is too dark.

I'm **happy for your help (#15)**. I'll enjoy my holiday and of course I won't forget to buy you **some souvenir (#16) as a return of (#17)** your hard work **to take (#18)** care of my house.

See you soon,

With love
Jessie



Note: '# (+ number)' is used to mark parts of the answer that contain grammatical problems.

Analysis: Although the letter is easy to follow, it has too many grammatical errors in too many sentences to merit a 7 score. The variety of grammatical constructions used seems enough for a 6 score, but there are not enough completely accurate sentences to merit a higher score.

Impression score for Grammatical Range and Accuracy: Possibly 6.

(See suggested corrections on the next page)

Corrections

#	Explanation of problem	Correct form
1	'vacation' is a count noun and needs an article in the singular form; the alternative fixed expression is 'on vacation'.	'for a vacation' 'on vacation'
2	Incorrect use of preposition. In English you always go/travel to a country, but live/stay in a country or place.	'to Australia'
3	The 'hope' is a consequence of the fact of going on holiday, and needs a connecting expression that expresses consequence, not addition. The use of the present continuous (I'm hoping') creates a more natural sense of what is in the writer's mind at the time of writing.	'so I'm hoping that...'
4	This is a tricky grammatical area, and the form used by the writer is not actually incorrect, just less natural than the continuous form. The continuous form communicates a sense of an ongoing activity (travelling) in the future, as opposed to a time schedule (On Sunday 14th you will travel to Cairo, then on to.....)	'I will be travelling'
5	This is redundant.	Delete 'to travel'
6	To use 'and' successfully the rest of the sentence needs to be re-shaped to show that the writer is not adding a new point but expressing a consequence of the first part. The word 'so' could be put in to show this ('and so...') but is optional.	' and would be really grateful if you would...'
7	'while' implies the period of absence, whereas 'when' implies the fact of the absence at a particular time	'while I'm abroad' (Strictly speaking 'when' is also correct but less natural)
8	'therefore' is too formal for this situation and for this type of informal correspondence.	'so'

#	Explanation of problem	Correct form
9	'color' / 'colour' is a noun, but the adjective 'colored / coloured' is needed here	'orange-coloured' 'orange-colored'
10	'gate' is countable and requires an indefinite article 'a' here	'a grey gate'
11	The writer has chosen incorrect word forms here	'brightly-coloured paint'
12	The word order is not appropriate as it creates ambiguity (is it the writer getting ready, or is the writer getting something else ready?)	'I will get the canned food ready...'
13	The sentence requires consistency of future tense verb use as it contains two verbs linked by 'and'.	'You will easily find it....'
14	Incorrect word form. In English you can say 'I worry' (verb) but you have to say 'I'm worried (adjective)	'I'm worried...'
15	This sentence doesn't work in English. 'I'm happy' is a statement of a current feeling but the situation is still hypothetical as the friend hasn't yet said whether or not she can help.	'It will make me really happy if you can help me'
16	'some' really needs a plural noun, because it implies more than one, given that 'souvenir' is a countable noun.	'buy you a souvenir' 'buy some souvenirs'
17	This is a fixed expression and should be learned as a whole.	'in return for....'
18	Gerund (-ing) required here after 'hard work' as it acts as a parallel phrase (hard work = taking care of my house)	'taking'

Impression-based Overall Score for the Sample Letter: 6.5

Improving the letter to achieve an IELTS 7

The same letter now at around a 7 level might look something like this.
Read it carefully and compare it with the original:



Dear Jen,

I'm going off on vacation to Australia for the summer and I really need someone to look after my house. I hope that you can do me a favour. I will be travelling to Perth for one week so would be pleased if you would take care of my house when I'm abroad.

As you know, my house is located at Centre Villa. There are only a few houses there, so mine is easy to spot. My house is number 22, Lot 7 with orange colored paint and grey wooden gate. You will notice there are a lot of trees surrounding my house. It is the only one with bright colored paint, which is very noticeable.

While I'm away from home, I hope that you could help to take care of my cats – Papai and Babai. I will get the canned cat food ready and you will easily find it in the kitchen. Please remember to switch on the light in the evening, as I'm worry that it might attract thieves if the house is too dark.

I'd be grateful for your help. I'll enjoy my holiday and, of course, I won't forget to buy you some souvenirs in return of your hard work taking care of my house.

See you soon,

*With love
Jessie*



Improving the letter to achieve an IELTS 8

To turn the level 7 letter into a level 8 might require slight expansion of the first part of the letter, further improvement in range and accuracy of grammar, a wider range of appropriate, higher level vocabulary, and more flexible use of referencing.

The same essay now at around an 8 level might look something like this.
Once again, read it carefully and compare it with the original:

Dear Jen,

I'm really excited as I'm going off on vacation to Australia during the summer. I'm taking a month's trip to the spectacular Great Barrier Reef. But, I really need someone to look after my house while I'm away, and I'm desperately hoping that you can help. I will be flying to Perth soon so would be really delightful if you will take care of my house.

As you know, my new place is located at Villa Centre. There are only a few houses there, so mine is easy to spot. It is Lot 7, number 22, with orange-colored paint and a grey wooden gate. You will notice there are a lot of trees surrounding the house, but It's the only one with brightly-colored paint, which is very noticeable.

While I'm overseas, I'm also hoping that you could help to take care of my cats – Papai and Babai. I will get the canned cat food ready and leave it in the kitchen. Oh yes, please remember to switch on the outside light in the evenings, as I'm worried that thieves might be tempted if the house is too dark.

I'd be eternally grateful if you can help me out. I look forward to a hard-earned rest and, of course, I won't forget to buy you some Aussie souvenirs in return for your hard work taking care of things.

See you soon,

*With love
Jessie*



Note: please remember that these re-written letters are only samples of those levels for guidance, not official scores. Neither are they models of task responses at those levels, as there are many ways to write a more successful letter of this type.

WRITING TASK 2 – RATED SAMPLE

Task 2 is also marked using band descriptors in four categories: **Task Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammatical Range and Accuracy**. You can find the publicly available performance descriptors on the official IELTS website: www.ielts.org. As you may have noticed, the first band descriptor category is different from that used in task 1: task 1s are rated for **Task Achievement**, whereas task 2s are rated for **Task Response**. This is because in task 2 you are required to present a well-developed point of view in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well-supported ideas.

This sample essay has been analysed to help you understand what score it might be awarded in each category and some reasons why.

Task Question

Some say you should always marry for love; others say that in an uncertain world it is wiser to marry for money. Discuss both points of view and give your own opinion.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Analysing Task Response

Nowadays, money is one of the most significant materials in our lives. To many people, it is appropriate to marry for money rather than love. However, I believe that both love and money should be bounce together in any marriages.

Certainly, money is an important part in our lives. It is hard for any persons to accept a partner which does not have money or at least a job to take care of future family. Hence, said “marry for money” also has its right in some extent.

However, love should be the root of any marriages. Firstly, it is because love is such a glue to connect two persons which have their own lives, become one. So, they can share each other’s the sadness, happiness to overcome any difficulties in daily lives. Moreover, love makes people growing up because they do not only have responsibility to themselves, but also to their partners as well. That is why marrying with love is always encouraged.

In my opinion, I think that both love and money is both necessary. Marriage relying on money would be rapidly disintegrated when unfortunately the money is run out. In contrary, marriage relying on love would sometimes come to end when they could not earn money to carry out family, such as paying bills, buying food, etc. Therefore, love and money should stand together in marriage even though their contribution could be unbalanced.

As we have seen, marriage without either money or love would come to an unhappy ending. So I believe that they both have their own contribution to a merry family.

Analysis: This essay follows the task requirements quite well. Both points of view are discussed (in paragraphs 2 and 3) and the writer’s personal opinion is offered (in the introduction, paragraph 4 and the conclusion). The opinion is clear. The paragraph on money is not very well developed and not entirely clear.

Impression score for Task Response: The essay seems to be good enough for a 7 level.

Analysing Coherence and Cohesion

[Nowadays], money is one of the most significant materials in our lives. To many people, it is appropriate to marry for money rather than love. **[However]**, I believe that both love and money should be bounce together in any marriages.

[Certainly], money is an important part in our lives **(TS)**. It is hard for any persons to accept a partner **[which*]** does not have money or at least a job to take care of future family. **[Hence]**, said “marry for money” also has its right in some extent.

[However], love should be the root of any marriages **(TS)**. **[Firstly]**, it is because love is such a glue to connect two persons which have their own lives, become one **(NC)**. **[So]**, they can share each other’s the sadness, happiness to overcome any difficulties in daily lives. **[Moreover]**, love makes people growing up because they do not only have responsibility to themselves, but also to their partners as well. **[That is why]** marrying with love is always encouraged.

[In my opinion], I think that both love and money is both necessary **(TS)**. Marriage relying on money would be rapidly disintegrated **[when]** unfortunately the money is run out. **[In contrary*]**, marriage relying on love would sometimes come to end **[when]** they could not earn money to carry out family **(NC)**, such as paying bills, buying food, etc. **[Therefore]**, love and money should stand together in marriage **[even though]** their contribution could be unbalanced **(NC)**.

[As we have seen], marriage without either money or love would come to an unhappy ending. **[So]** I believe that they both have their own contribution to a merry family.



Note: Brackets **[]** show the connecting expressions, **(TS)** denotes topic sentences, **(NC)** denotes sentences where ideas are not clear.

Analysis: Most linking expressions are appropriate but two are not (See asterisk *).

Coherence is concerned with the effectiveness of what the essay is trying to communicate. The essay is well structured – each paragraph announces its topic clearly (TS) and the introduction announces the opinion of the writer. Sometimes the ideas are not entirely clear inside the paragraphs (see NC). Also the writer has a tendency to be repetitive.

Impression score for Coherence and Cohesion: Possibly 7.

Analysing Lexical Resource

Nowadays, money is one of the most significant materials in our lives. To many people, it is appropriate to marry for money rather than love. However, I believe that both love and money should be **bounce (#1)** together in any marriages.

Certainly, money **is (#2)** an important part in our lives. It is hard for any persons to accept a partner which does not have money or at least a job to take care of future family. Hence, **said (#3)** “marry for money” also has its right in some extent.

However, love should be the **root (#4)** of any marriages. Firstly, it is because love is such a **glue to connect (#5)** two persons which have their own lives, become one. So, they can share each other’s the sadness, happiness to overcome any difficulties in daily lives. Moreover, love makes people growing up because they do not only have responsibility to themselves, but also to their partners as well. That is why marrying with love is always **encouraged (#6)**.

In my opinion, I think that both love and money is both necessary. Marriage relying on money would be rapidly disintegrated when unfortunately the money is run out. In contrary, marriage relying on love would sometimes come to end when they could not earn money to carry out family, such as paying bills, buying food, etc. Therefore, love and money should **stand together (#7)** in marriage even though their **contribution could be unbalanced (#8)**.

As we have seen, marriage without either money or love would come to an unhappy **ending (#9)**. So I believe that they both have their own contribution to a **merry (#10)** family.



Note: ‘#’ (+ number) is used to mark each vocabulary item that seems faulty or inappropriate.

Analysis: The use of vocabulary seems quite reasonable but attempts to use a wider range are not always successful (see corrections #1–10 on the next page). Probably not quite good enough for a 7.

Impression score for Lexical Resource: Possibly 6 or 6.5.

Corrections

#	Explanation of problem	More appropriate forms
1	'bounce' is usually used with 'ball' as in 'bounce a ball'	'love and money should combine together in any marriage' 'love and money should both be present in any marriage' <i>It's possible, too, that the writer meant to write 'bound together', which is also fine.</i>
2	'the expression 'part' is usually preceded by its 'word friend' 'play' as in 'play a part'	'money plays an important part in our lives'
3	'said' is a verb in the past tense and cannot be used without a subject word, so a better lexical option is needed	'Hence the saying, "Marry for money" ...' <i>(Or, alternatively, changing the grammar):</i> 'Hence it is sometimes said, "Marry for money" ...'
4	'root' is often used to talk about 'cause' as in 'root cause of' ... but not just about marriage	'love should be the basis of any marriage' 'love should form the foundation of every marriage' 'love should underpin every marriage' 'every marriage should be built on love'
5	'glue' sounds rather unusual here and doesn't normally go with 'connect'	'love cements the relationship between two people' 'love is a kind of glue that bonds two people' '...love bonds two people' '...love is the bond that holds two people together'
6	'encouraged' seems incomplete (<i>encouraged by whom?</i>) and may not be what the writer is trying to mean	'That is why marrying for love is always an advantage ' 'For these reasons, marrying for love should always be encouraged '

Explanation of problem**More appropriate forms**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>7 'stand together' makes sense but is not a standard usage</p> | <p>'For the above reasons, love and money should co-exist within marriage'</p> <p>'For these reasons, love and money should both be present in a marriage'</p> <p>'For these reasons, a marriage needs a felicitous blend of love and money'</p> |
| <p>8 'unbalanced' here is ambiguous and could mean 'mentally unstable'; the overall meaning could be made more precise</p> | <p>'...even though their relative contribution to it could be uneven'</p> <p>'...even though they may not each contribute evenly to it'</p> |
| <p>9 'ending' is used usually to describe the conclusion to stories, films or plays</p> | <p>'...would come to an unhappy end'</p> |
| <p>10 'merry' is not usually used as a description of a family; most often used with 'Christmas' as in 'Merry Christmas'</p> | <p>'...their own contribution to a happy family'</p> <p>'...their own contribution to a well-balanced family'</p> <p>'...their own contribution to a successful family';</p> |

Analysing Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Nowadays, money is one of the most significant materials in our lives. To many people, it is appropriate to marry for money rather than love. However, I believe that both love and money should be bounce together **in any marriages (#1)**.

Certainly, money is an important part in our lives. It is hard for **any persons (#2)** to accept a **partner which (#3)** does not have money or at least a job to take care of **of future family (#4)**. Hence, **said "marry for money" (#5)** also **has its right in (#6)** some extent.

However, love should be the root of **any marriages (#7)**. Firstly, **it (#8)** is because love **is such a glue to connect (#9)** two persons **which (#10)** have their own lives, **become one (#11)**. So, they can share each other's **the (#12) sadness, happiness (#13)** to overcome any difficulties **in daily lives (#14)**. Moreover, love makes people **growing up (#15)** because they do **not only have (#16)** responsibility to themselves, but also to their partners as well. That is why **marrying with love (#17)** is always encouraged.

In my opinion, I think that both **love and money is (#18)** both necessary. Marriage relying on money would **be rapidly disintegrated (#19)** when unfortunately **the money is run out (#20)**. **In contrary (#21)**, marriage relying on love would sometimes **come to end (#22)** when they could not earn **money to carry out family (#23)**, such as paying bills, buying food, etc. Therefore, love and money should stand together in marriage even though their contribution could be unbalanced.

As we have seen, marriage without either money or love would come to an unhappy ending. So I believe that they **both have their own contribution (#24)** to a merry family.



Note: '# (+ number)' is used to mark parts of the answer that contain grammatical problems.

Analysis: Although the essay is quite easy to follow, it has too many grammatical errors in too many sentences to merit a 7 score (see corrections #1-24 on the next page). The range of grammatical constructions used seems quite good.

Impression score for Grammatical Range and Accuracy: Possibly 6 or 6.5.

Corrections

#	Explanation of problem	Correct form
1	'any' takes a singular noun	'any marriage'
2	'any' takes a singular noun	'any person'
3	'which' is used to refer to things (not a person)	'partner who does not have money'
4	'future family' needs further specification to establish whose family it is	'take care of their future family' 'take care of their family in the future'
5, 6	After a subject noun phrase ('the saying, 'marry for money') the verb should be 'is + right' and the preposition should be 'to' because 'right' means 'correct' (adjective) here, not 'a right' (noun)	'the saying, 'marry for money', is also right to some extent'
7	The writer repeats this same error frequently and should try to use alternative forms to reduce mistakes	'any marriage' 'all marriages' 'every marriage'
8, 9	'it' is not the most appropriate backward reference word here, when adding an explanation, and neither is 'such'	' This is because love is a glue connecting two persons...'
10	'which' is not used when the preceding noun is a person;	'This is because love is a glue uniting two persons who have their own lives...'
11	'become one' no longer fits with the whole sentence and needs to be replaced by a more suitable vocabulary word 'uniting'	'This is because love is a glue uniting two persons who hitherto have had their own, independent lives...' (<i>makes the sense more precise</i>)

#	Explanation of problem	Correct form
12	'the' is not needed here	'...share each other's sadness and happiness to overcome any difficulties in their daily lives'
13	the comma between 'sadness, happiness' is not correct as there are only two items listed; conjunction 'and' is required	'...share each other's sadness and happiness to overcome any difficulties in their daily lives'
14	a word needs to be inserted before 'daily...' to complete the sense (<i>whose lives?</i>)	'...share each other's sadness and happiness to overcome any difficulties in their daily lives'
15	'makes' takes bare infinitive form 'grow up'	'love makes people grow up because they have responsibility not only to themselves but also to their partners'
16	'not only' could be positioned better	'love makes people grow up because they have responsibility not only to themselves but also to their partners'
17	preposition 'with' is not correct here	'marrying for love...'
18	'love and money' is plural; 'both' is repeated unnecessarily	'both love and money are necessary' or, 'love and money are both necessary'
19	The passive form is not normally used with 'disintegrated'	'Marriage relying on money would rapidly disintegrate '
		'Marriage relying solely on money would rapidly disintegrate ' (<i>completes the sense more precisely</i>)
20	Use of hypothetical 'would' in the preceding part of the sentence ('would disintegrate') means that the verb form in this later clause requires a 'simple past' verb form	'when unfortunately the money ran out'

Explanation of problem

21 'In contrary' isn't used as a linking expression – this form is a confusion of two other forms: 'In contrast to...' and 'On the contrary...'
In any case the writer doesn't need a discourse marker of contrast here.

22 'to end' requires an article

23 'money' needs to be given more precision; 'carry out family' is not complete (*family what?*); use of 'etc' is not to be encouraged in formal writing as it seems lazy

24 'have' is not used to form the expression 'have a contribution' unless the words 'to make' are added as in, '...have a contribution to make'; otherwise 'make' is used

Correct form

'**Similarly**, marriage relying on love would sometimes come to **an** end'
(*This sentence parallels the writer's previous one, it is not in contrast to it*)

'Similarly, a marriage relying on love alone would rapidly disintegrate'
(*marriage is being used in a countable sense; 'alone' completes the sense using an alternative form to 'solely', used above in #19*)

'enough money to carry out **family duties** such as paying bills or buying food.'

'...they both make their own contribution...'
'...they both have their own contribution to make...'

Impression-based Overall Score for the Sample Essay: 6.0 or 6.5

Improving the essay to achieve an IELTS 7

The same essay now at around a 7 level might look something like this.

Read it carefully and compare it with the original:

Nowadays, money is one of the most significant materials in our lives. To many people, it is appropriate to marry for money rather than love. However, I believe that both love and money should be combined in any marriage.

Certainly, money plays an important part in our lives. It is hard for any persons to accept a partner who does not have money or at least a job to take care of their future family. Hence, it is said, "marry for money" is right in some extent.

However, love should be the root of any marriage. Firstly, it is because love is such a strong bond between two persons who have their own lives, and become one. So, they can share each other's sadness, happiness to overcome any difficulties in their daily lives. Moreover, love makes people grow up because they do not only have responsibility to themselves, but also to their partners as well. That is why marrying for love is always encouraged.

In my opinion, I think that love and money are both necessary. A marriage relying on money would rapidly disintegrate when unfortunately the money ran out. In contrary, a marriage relying on love would sometimes come to end when they could not earn money to carry out family duties such as paying bills, buying food, etc. Therefore, love and money should stand together in marriage even though their contribution could be unbalanced.

As we have seen, marriage without either money or love would come to an unhappy end. So I believe that they both make their own contribution to a merry family.

Improving the essay to achieve an IELTS 8

To turn the level 7 essay into a level 8 would require further improvement in range and accuracy of grammar, greater clarity and better connection of ideas, and a wider range of appropriate, higher level vocabulary.

So the same essay now at around an 8 level might look something like this.

Once again, read it carefully and compare it with the original:

Nowadays, money is one of the most significant elements in our lives. So, for many people, it may seem appropriate to marry for money rather than love. Certainly, money plays an important part in our lives. It is challenging for any persons to accept a partner who does not have money, or at least a job to take care of their future family. Hence, the expression, “marry for money” seems appropriate, in some extent, at least. However, I believe that marriage should involve a combination of both love and money.

Clearly, love should be the foundation of any marriage. This is because firstly, love is such a strong bond between two persons, who have their own lives, yet become one. They can share each other’s sadness or happiness in order to overcome any difficulties in daily lives. Moreover, love fosters maturity because each member of a couple no longer has responsibility only for themselves, but also for their partner. These are just two, key reasons why marrying for love should always be encouraged.

In my opinion, love and money are equally necessary. A marriage relying solely on money might rapidly disintegrate in the unfortunate event of the money running out. Similarly, a marriage relying on love alone might sometimes come to an end if the couple could not earn enough money to manage their family’s obligations such as paying bills, or buying food. Therefore, love and money should stand together in marriage, even though their contribution might often be somewhat unequal.

To summarise, marriage without either money or love could come to an unfortunate end. For that reason, I would claim that they both make their own, vital contribution to the creation of a merry family.



Note: please remember that these re-written essays are only samples of those levels for guidance, not official scores. Neither are they models of task responses at those levels.



IELTS WRITING DOCTOR

WHAT'S INSIDE:

❖ IELTS Grammar

- Writing Task 1 (expressions, verb tenses, sequence of events)
- Writing Task 2 (suggested language for all essay types)
- Article types and use
- Prepositions

❖ IELTS Vocabulary

- Writing Task 1 – vocabulary and expressions (all letter types)
- Writing Task 2 – vocabulary and expressions (all essay types)

IELTS GRAMMAR — WRITING TASK 1

Purpose and Formality

Grammar can sometimes make you feel a bit sick, right? But, it's so important in IELTS. In General Training Task 1, often the problem is in choosing language that is not just correct but language that fits the relationship and the degree of formality of the situation.

This first section shows some of the different purposes you might want to express in different types of letter, with examples at different levels of formality. Why not take a look! You might even feel better afterwards!



Introducing yourself

More Formal

My name is ... and I am writing to you to...

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is...

Before I begin, I would just like to introduce myself. I am...

Less formal

I'm John Smith, your next door neighbour, and I just wanted to...

It's John here. I was just wondering if you...

Before I start, let me introduce myself. I'm...

Explaining your reason/purpose for writing

More Formal

The reason I am writing is to...

I am writing in order to...

My reason for writing concerns...

This letter is in regard to...

Less formal

I'm writing to you because...

I'm writing to...

I'm writing about...

This letter is about...

Sample sentences:

My name is John Roberts and **I am writing in order to** apologise for having lost your phone.

My reason for writing concerns the behaviour of your sales staff.

I am writing to explain what happened.

This letter is about the problems I've been having with my apartment recently.

I'm writing about my leaving party next week.

Expressing your thanks

More Formal

I should like to thank you (for...)
 I am/We are most grateful (to you) for...
 We should like to express our gratitude to you for...
 I cannot thank you enough for...
 I very much appreciated your/the...

Less formal

Thanks for...(+ noun or + “-ing”)
 It was really great of you to...
 A big thank you for...
 Thanks a million for...
 Thanks so much for...

Sample sentences:

I am most grateful to you for having allowed me to join your association.
I cannot thank you enough for your hospitality.
It was really great of you to let me stay at your place last week.
Thanks a million for letting me stay in your beach house during the summer.

Offering explanations

More Formal

I would like to explain what...
 There is a simple explanation for what happened.
 I would like to offer you an explanation of what...
 Allow me to explain what happened.

Less formal

I'll tell you what...
 Let me explain what.../why I can't come
 I want to tell you what happened...
 If it's OK, I'll explain what...

Sample sentences:

I would like to explain what I would like you to do.
I would like to offer you an explanation of what took place...
I'll tell you what happened last Friday.
If it's OK, I'll explain what the situation is now.

Talking about when something happened

More Formal

The event/robbery took place a week ago
 Recently we held a party to celebrate my birthday
 He stayed with us for several months
 He left the house approximately a month ago

Less formal

It happened last week
 We had a party for my birthday not long ago
 He was at our place for a few months
 He left here about a month back now.

Sample sentences:

The wedding ceremony took place a week ago.
We recently held a meeting to discuss the company's expansion plans.
He was at our place for quite a few months.

Seeking explanations

More Formal

We would be most grateful if you could inform us of the reasons for...

I should really like to know why...

Would you mind informing us of the reasons for...?

Could you possibly explain to us why...?

Less formal

Please tell me why you...

Why on earth did you...?

Could you tell us why...?

Can you please explain why you...?

Sample sentences:

I should really like to know why the gate was left open.

Please tell me why you can't come to my party.

Why on earth did you leave the house unlocked?

Making suggestions/giving advice in your letter

More Formal

It would be a good idea (for you) to...

My advice to you would be to...

May I suggest that you...

I advise you to...

It would be better if you...

Less formal

Why don't you (+ infinitive)...?

I think you should...

How about (+ verb in "-ing" form)...?

If you take my advice, you should...

You'd better (+ infinitive without 'to') /

You'd better not (+ infinitive without 'to')...

Sample sentences:

It would be a good idea for you to contact your lawyer.

It would be better if you went to the police.

Why don't you come over for lunch on Sunday?

How about phoning your sister and asking her to lend you the money?

You'd better find out the cost of the flight first.

You'd better not tell your wife about the broken ring.

Saying you are not responsible for something

More Formal

I do not consider that I am responsible for...

It is/was not my responsibility to...

Responsibility for this event lies elsewhere.

It is your responsibility to...

The responsibility rests squarely on your shoulders.

Less formal

It's not my fault that...

It's not my job to...

It was someone else's fault, not mine.

It's up to you to...

The ball's in your court.

Sample sentences:

I do not consider that I am responsible for the problem.

It's not my fault that the car has broken down.

It's not my job to clean the flat every week.

It's up to you to take the gift back to the shop.

Describing facilities

More Formal

There is a...

It has a...

Another (positive) feature of... is ...

You will find...

Less formal

It's got a...

It's also got a...

Another (good) thing about...is...

You'll find...

Sample sentences:

There is a bathroom just off the bedroom.

It has a large bath.

Another feature of our club is that it is cheap to join.

It's also got a tiled floor.

Another good thing about the apartment is that it's near to the city centre.

Suggesting options or choices

More Formal

You could opt for...

The choice is entirely yours.

There are a number of alternatives...

These are the best options.

The best option might be to... / the...

Less formal

You could go for...

It's up to you what you choose.

There are several possibilities.

These are your best bets...

Your best bet is to... / the...

Sample sentences:

You could opt for the cheaper travel insurance plan.

The best option might be to buy the apartment with the extra bedroom.

You could go for the car with the low mileage.

Your best bet is to pay a deposit and then get the vehicle inspected.

Exploring possible solutions to a problem

More Formal

One answer to this problem might be to...

A possible solution could be to...

You could try (+ verb in "-ing" form)

Less formal

The answer is to...

(verb in "-ing" form) ... is a possible answer

The way to go is to...

Sample sentences:

One answer to this problem might be to train new teachers.

You could try phoning the local representative.

The answer is to invest more money in organic foods.

Eating less sugar **is a possible answer** to poor dental health.

Rejecting someone else's explanation

More Formal

I must refute your explanation/claim entirely.

Your explanation of events lacks all credibility.

You are deluding yourself if you imagine I would accept that.

Less formal

What you said/say is just not true.

No one would believe that story.

You must be crazy if you think I'd fall for that.

Sample sentences:

Your explanation of my reason for complaining **lacks all credibility.**

What you said about my behaviour at the office party **is just not true.**

Denying that you did something

More Formal

I categorically deny (+ verb in “-ing” form)...

It was not of my doing.

I was not involved at all in...

Less formal

I didn't have anything to do with...

I didn't do it.

It was nothing to do with me.

Sample sentences:

I categorically deny breaking the window.

Believe me, **I didn't have anything to do with** the broken window.

I didn't damage your car.

Requesting information

More Formal

I should like to know when...

I should appreciate some information on...

It is important for me to know...

Would you mind giving me some background on...?

Less formal

Can you let me know me when...?

It would be good to hear from you about...

I need to know...

Could you fill me in on...?

Sample sentences:

I should like to know when my refund will be granted.

It is important for me to know the likely cost of the repair.

Can you let me know when there will be a vacancy at your hotel?

Could you fill me in on the current situation?

Apologising and making excuses

More Formal

I am really sorry but I am unable to attend the function due to...

Regretfully, it is impossible for me to attend owing to...

I would dearly like to come, but sadly, I...

It is with the utmost regret that I must decline your invitation.

Less formal

I was really looking forward to coming, but something has come up.

I'd love to come but I just can't because...

It's a real pity, as I'd so like to come along, but...

I'm so sorry to turn down your invite...

Sample sentences:

I am really sorry but I am unable to attend the function due to a prior engagement.

Regretfully, it is impossible for me to attend owing to an illness in the family.

I'd love to come but I just can't because my car is off the road at the moment.

It's a real pity, as I'd so like to come along to the wedding, but I'll be overseas that month.

Expressing hope

More Formal

I hope that you enjoy yourself in...

It is my hope that you...

With some luck you will now be able to...

Let us hope that in future...

Less formal

Hope you have a good time in...

I really hope you...

With a bit of luck you should now...

Let's hope that next time...

Sample sentences:

It is my hope that you will thoroughly enjoy your stay in our city.

Let us hope that in future you will have better opportunities.

With a bit of luck you should now be able to sleep more easily.

Let's hope that next time you find a job you really like.

Nearing the end of your letter

More Formal

I shall look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

I will await your response to this letter.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

I trust you will enjoy your stay...

I will look forward to receiving your payment.

It is my hope that you will respond favourably to my request.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

I'll look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Less formal

Hope to hear from you soon.

Waiting to hear your thoughts.

All the best for the future.

Have a great time.

Looking forward to getting the money.

Hope to get some positive feedback from you.

Thanks a lot for your time/Thanks for everything.

See you soon, ...

Ending the letter

More Formal

Yours faithfully,

Yours sincerely,

Yours,

Less formal

Best wishes/With best wishes,

All the best,

Love/Lots of love, (usually between female friends or between men and women)

Controlling Verb Tenses

In letters, tense usage often varies quite a lot. The writer may be talking about recent events, future plans, past events, ongoing activities, all inside the same letter! In an IELTS exam, therefore, you need to be careful. Using a variety of tenses accurately makes a letter sound natural. Here are some examples of typical tense usage in letter writing:

(Note the tense 'cue' words in **bold type**)



Present tense

My name is...

I live in the same street as you.

I like walking...

Present continuous tense

Currently, I am studying to be a doctor.

I am writing to complain about the poor standard of service in your shop.

At the moment I am visiting my mother in Alaska.

Simple past tense

I came into your shop **yesterday** to buy a computer.

Last week you told me that you couldn't replace the phone.

I worked for Apple **from** 2010 **until** 2011.

Present perfect

I have lived in Sydney **since** 1999.

I have worked for the government **for** 10 years.

I have **always been** honest with you.

Present perfect continuous tense

I have been trying to contact you **on and off for days**.

I've been dreaming of living by the coast **all my life**.

Past continuous tense

When I phoned yesterday your secretary said you were **in the middle of** writing me an email.

At that time I was hoping to become a senior executive.

Past perfect tense

By the time I realised what had happened the bus had **already left**, with my suitcase still on it.

I phoned yesterday but you had **already gone** home.

Future forms

I'll write again **soon**.

If you **don't refund** my money, I will seek legal advice.

Unless you change your mind, I'll see you **next week**.

I'm going to change my job **after** Christmas.

She's going to find it difficult to live in a large city, **when they move next year**.

We arrive in Lisbon **on the 25th**.

Comment: You could also say, 'We'll arrive' or 'We'll be arriving'—both are also grammatically correct, but the sense is a little different.

I'm leaving for Paris **on Monday**.

Comment: You could also say, 'I'll leave' or 'I'll be leaving'—both are also grammatically correct, but the sense is a little different.

Recounting a Sequence of Events

Have you ever had something stolen? Or had an accident, maybe? Me, too! Often in a letter you need to explain things that happened as a sequence of events. I'm pretty sure most of you will know, '**First/Then/After that/Next/Finally**' for time sequences when telling a story or recounting an event in stages, but here are some other sequence expressions that can be really useful in letters. Learners sometimes find them tricky to learn but you'll be fine! As a bonus, I have given you some helpful expressions for situations in a letter when you want to add a new piece of information, but in a natural way.



Expression	Explanation	Example
At first	Often used to indicate a temporary, initial situation that changes	At first I was very nervous, but slowly I became more and more confident
Meanwhile/ At the same time	Used to talk about something else happening within the same time period	My husband was feverishly phoning the police; meanwhile/at the same time , I was chasing after the thief with my umbrella.
Eventually	Often used for talking about some change or solution that takes place after a lengthy gap in time but usually before the absolute end	First he asked her to marry him, but then he met another woman and changed his mind. So she ran away to Spain to forget him and they lost contact. Eventually , though, they got back together, and finally settled down happily in Italy.
In the end	Often used for talking about how a situation is resolved after some difficulties during the earlier parts	The police chase them across France, Germany and Russia and in the end they are caught in Siberia, and then brought back and imprisoned.
At the end/ At the very end	Often used for talking about the specific end point in a movie, book or story	At the (very) end of the movie, they are seen jumping off the cliff, but you don't get to see whether or not they survive.

Signalling new points when writing to friends

When writing to friends or less formally we often use a broader range of markers to signal each fresh item on our list of things we want to say.

For added politeness, we often use extended introductions (underlined in the examples) to soften the item of news, or request, that is about to be revealed, especially if it concerns a sensitive or important issue.

The simple markers 'First/Second/Third/Finally...' are unable to achieve this empathetic subtlety of written communication.

Examples

First of all, I'd like to say how good it was to see you the other day. I really enjoyed...

Another thing I need to tell you is that...

Something else perhaps I shouldn't forget to mention is that...

One final thing, before I forget, I'd like to ask you if you could possibly...

Another thing I need to tell you is that, sadly, I won't be able to come to your birthday party next month. I'm really disappointed but it's unavoidable because...

Something else perhaps I shouldn't forget to mention is that you'll need to bring plenty of spending money for the trip because Switzerland is not a cheap country. I know this won't be easy for you now that you are unemployed but...

One final thing, before I forget. I'd like to ask you if you could possibly look after my grandmother for a month while I'm overseas. I know it's a big ask, but...

Using Conditionals to Achieve Different Purposes

Oh no, conditionals, I can hear you groan! In letters, though, conditional forms are really useful because they are able to carry a variety of communicative purposes. Have a look at these examples, and remember that in letters you need to try to maintain a reasonable level of politeness even if you are communicating a low-level threat!



If you let your dog into my garden again, **I'll call** the police.

Purpose: making a low-level threat.

If you can change your dates to October, **then I'll be able** to come.

Purpose: a request.

Unless you repair the shower, **I will** withhold the rent and use a lawyer to protect my interests.

Purpose: making a low-level threat.

If you had told me that the car was faulty **I would not have bought it**, but you chose to keep quiet about its true condition.

Purpose: expressing a regret about the past.

If your store offered better service then **you would receive** fewer complaints like this one.

Purpose: making a suggestion for improvement.

IELTS GRAMMAR — WRITING TASK 2

Writing Task 2 places different kinds of demand on your language skills. It involves careful understanding of what the task prompt requires, and then an ability to develop and justify your own point of view, using ideas and examples based on your own knowledge of social issues. The importance of accurate and appropriate grammar needs to be respected, especially as Task 2 carries more weight than Task 1. Let's have a little look at how to use grammar more effectively. Are you ready?



Essay Type 1 — Indicate and Support Your Level of Agreement

In a Type 1 essay task you are required to agree, partly agree or disagree with a stated point of view.

Sample task

*“Parents are totally responsible for the bad behaviour of their children.
Do you **agree**?/Do you **agree** or **disagree**?/To what extent do you **agree**?”*

Language for introducing your essay (Introduction paragraph)

Usually an essay starts with a general statement linked to the IELTS Task 2 topic. Then the introduction usually proceeds with a statement of intention, telling the reader what your essay is going to do and/or what your general point of view is. Future tense form ‘will...’ is often used in this part of the essay.

After writing your general statement related to the task topic, you could express your intentions for this type of essay using language such as shown in these examples:

Examples

- This essay **will suggest/argue that ... is ...**
- Although/Even though ... is ..., **it will be argued** here that ...
This essay **will express full agreement** with this view **and will offer** reasons for this position.
- This essay **will agree in part** with this view, and **will offer reasons** for this position
- This essay **will express complete disagreement** with this view and **will justify** this viewpoint.
- I totally agree that.../I largely agree that.../I partly agree that.../I totally disagree that...

Here is a sample Introduction:

Parenting is a complex and challenging role in the busy, modern world and it seems to be the case that some children are behaving less thoughtfully. There are those who believe that the responsibility lies fully with parents. This essay will agree in part with this view.

Improving grammar in the early sentences of body paragraphs

In a Type 1 essay your body paragraphs will probably involve firstly a shorter paragraph explaining reasons for holding the point of view which is opposite to your own (either agreeing or disagreeing), then a longer paragraph justifying the other side (your own view)

Using 'There is/there are'

- **There is** a range of/**There are** various agencies other than parents which **share** some responsibility for a child's behaviour...
- **There are** various ways in which parents should shoulder the greatest responsibility for the way their children behave.

Or, more simply,

- Various other social agencies **share** responsibility for the way children behave.

Starting body paragraphs with extended topic sentences (using 'Even though...', 'Although...', '...who...', '...that...')

Using subordinate clauses helps to create longer, more detailed sentences.

Example

Although it can probably be agreed that other agencies have some role in shaping children's behaviour, **it must be parents who** carry the most responsibility.

Replacing simple connectors when developing paragraph ideas/examples

It's really tempting to use simple connectors like 'Firstly/Secondly/Thirdly/Finally' especially when you are under time pressure but usually this merely indicates a list rather than a commentary. Look at some alternative options for connecting different essay points:

Alternative options Parents clearly **have/carry** the primary **responsibility** for the way their children **behave**. **It seems undeniable that** they are the child's first teachers, and...
Linked to this is the fact that parents are crucial to the development of identity and personality. ... **What is more ... Overall then ...**

Finishing off your essay

A short conclusion helps to round off your essay, but sometimes the final paragraph in a Type 1 Essay is used to express your personal opinion.

Starting off the conclusion appropriately

These are the usual ways of beginning/signalling your concluding paragraph:

In conclusion, .../Summing up, .../To conclude, .../To summarise, .../All in all, ...

Using tenses appropriately in the conclusion

See how a conclusion might continue for Essay Type 1 using **Simple Present**:

*Summing up, from a personal perspective it **seems** reasonable to suggest that parents **are** largely rather than totally responsible for their children's behaviour because ...*

Or you might prefer **It + Present Perfect Passive + clause with Simple Present**:

*Summing up, **it has been argued** in this essay **that** parents **are** largely, rather than totally responsible for their children's behaviour because ...*



For more tips on how to add fluency to your writing, give examples, form complex sentences and much more, go to:

'Grammar suggestions for all IELTS Task 2 essay types' on page 208.

Essay Type 2 — Present a Two-sided Discussion

In a Type 2 essay task you are required to discuss 2 sides of an argument or 2 points of view, and explain which one you personally agree (or partly agree) with, and why.

Sample task

Some people think that parents are responsible for their children's bad behaviour; others say that schools are responsible.

Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Language for introducing your essay (Introduction paragraph)

You would probably first write a general statement linked to task topic, then express your intentions for this type of essay by using language like the following:

Use of basic 'will' form

This short essay **will explore** both perspectives and then offer a personal viewpoint.

Use of passive form

Both perspectives **will be explored** and then a personal view **will be offered**.

Use of '-ing' forms

After **exploring/discussing** both viewpoints, this essay **will suggest/argue that...**

Having explored both viewpoints, ...

Noun form + 'will' future

After an **exploration/discussion** of both viewpoints, this essay **will offer** the view that...

Here is a sample Introduction:

The relative influence of home and school on a child's behaviour changes with time. These days everyone seems to be busy. After an exploration of the respective responsibilities of both agencies this essay will offer the view that...

Improving grammar in the early sentences of body paragraphs

In a Type 2 essay, you will recall, your body paragraphs are expected to discuss two different viewpoints and then, in a final paragraph, give your own opinion.

Using present tense forms to start body paragraphs

Parents clearly **have/carry** the primary **responsibility** for the way their children **behave** (* **for a number of reasons...**).

Note: if you add * **'for a number of reasons'** then you would normally continue by using connecting signal expressions like, **'First of all .../Another reason why ... is that.../Finally...'**

at the beginning of each sentence which is offering a new reason.

Starting body paragraphs with extended topic sentences (using 'Even though...', 'Although...', '...who...', '...that...')

Using subordinate clauses helps to create longer, more detailed sentences.

Examples

- **Although it seems reasonable to suggest that** schools are responsible for their pupils, parents are the prime agent of socialisation.
- **Even though parents have the primary responsibility,** schools probably share at least some responsibility for behaviour.

Replacing simple connectors when developing paragraph ideas/examples

It's really tempting to use simple connectors like 'Firstly/Secondly/Thirdly/Finally' especially when you are under time pressure but usually this merely indicates a list rather than a commentary. Look at some alternative options for connecting different essay points:

Alternative options

Schools also **have/carry** a key responsibility for the way children behave. **It seems incontrovertible that** they have many years of contact with each child. ...**Allied to this is the fact that** schools set and impose their own rules of behaviour for pupils at school... **Furthermore...** **To sum up,**...

Finishing off your essay

In Essay Type 2 the final paragraph can be used to offer your own opinion on the topic, so it may be developed differently.

Starting off the conclusion appropriately

These are the usual ways of beginning/signalling your concluding paragraph:

In conclusion, .../Summing up, .../To conclude, .../To summarise, .../All in all, ...

Using tenses appropriately in the conclusion: Present Perfect Passive

Look at this example of the use of an 'it + present perfect passive' sentence, followed by the personal opinion with a present tense form:

Example

*To conclude, **it has been shown/suggested/argued** that both parents and school seem to share responsibility for shaping the behaviour of children. **My own opinion/view/perspective is that...** **Personally, I believe/think that** responsibility for behaviour can never be in the hands of parents only, except, perhaps, in the very early years of life. It is only during those early years that the parents are the sole agents of socialisation patterns. At this time, they lay the vital foundations for the child's future, successful adaptation into the wider society.*



For more tips on how to add fluency to your writing, give examples, form complex sentences and much more, go to:

'Grammar suggestions for all IELTS Task 2 essay types' on page 208.

Essay Type 3 — Discuss Advantages & Disadvantages

In a Type 3 essay task you are required to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a given situation or a viewpoint.

Sample task

*It is widely believed that a child who behaves badly should be punished. What are the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of punishing a child?*

Language for introducing your essay (Introduction paragraph)

You would probably first write a general statement linked to the task topic, then express your intentions for this type of essay by using language like the following:

Example

- This response **will explore** the relative advantages and disadvantages of ...
- This essay **will compare** the advantages and disadvantages of ...

Or, a passive

- Both pros and cons of ... **will be discussed** in this short essay.

Here is a sample Introduction:

No child is perfect, but the long process of socialisation enables parents and other agencies to shape children's behaviour so that they can fit into their culture and society effectively. This essay will explore the relative pros and cons of punishing...

Improving grammar in the early sentences of body paragraphs

In a Type 3 essay your two body paragraphs will probably examine the pros, and then the cons of the situation described in the task prompt.

Use of complex sentences with 'that...'

There are several advantages of punishing a child's inappropriate behaviour. One clear benefit **is that** ... Another advantage **lies in the fact that**...

Starting body paragraphs with extended topic sentences (using 'Even though...', 'Although...', 'who...', 'that...')

Using subordinate clauses helps to create longer, more detailed sentences.

Example

Although many parents would advocate the judicious use of appropriate punishment, there are some parents who believe that all punishment brings negative consequences for a child's healthy development.

Replacing simple connectors when developing paragraph ideas/examples

It's really tempting to use simple connectors like 'Firstly/Secondly/Thirdly/Finally' especially when you are under time pressure but usually this merely indicates a list rather than a commentary. Look at some **alternative options** for connecting different essay points:

Alternative options

A variety of advantages can be put forward for punishing a child's poor behaviour. **Foremost among these** is the establishment of clear rules for right and wrong... **A further benefit** involves the building of awareness about consequences of one's actions... **Yet another advantage** comes from the reinforcement of parental authority...

Finishing off your essay

A short conclusion helps to round off your essay, summarising what was previously said without too much repetition.

Starting off the conclusion appropriately

These are the usual ways of beginning/signalling your concluding paragraph:

In conclusion, .../Summing up, .../To conclude, .../To summarise, .../All in all, ...

Using appropriate tenses in the conclusion: present perfect

*To summarise, this essay **has outlined** a range of advantages and disadvantages of punishing children. **It has suggested** that punishment enables a child to acknowledge wrongdoing, and acts as a deterrent. In contrast, **it has argued** that punishment always risks resentment and rebellion if not administered sensitively.*



For more tips on how to add fluency to your writing, give examples, form complex sentences and much more, go to:

'Grammar suggestions for all IELTS Task 2 essay types' on page 208.

Essay Type 4 — Explain & Offer Solutions or Consequences

In a Type 4 essay task you need to explain the reasons why the situation in the task prompt has arisen, and how it can be solved, or what consequences it gives rise to.

Sample task

*Children's behaviour seems to be getting worse.
Why is this happening and what can be done to improve it?*

Language for introducing your essay (Introduction paragraph)

You would probably first write a general statement linked to the task topic, then express your intentions for this type of essay by using language like the following:

Example

- This essay **will explain why...** and **will suggest what** can be done.../will suggest what X should do...?
- **After explaining why...**, this essay **will suggest what...**
- This essay **will suggest that the reason why...** is that...
- **It will be argued that the best way to...** is to.../... **that the best solution to this problem is to...**

Here is a sample Introduction:

There seem to be more incidents involving bad behaviour at school and in society generally than was the case fifty years ago. This essay will try to explain why this is happening and suggest measures which might improve the situation.

Improving grammar in the early sentences of body paragraphs

Use of passive

In response to 'Why' part of task:

- Various reasons **can be offered to explain** falling behaviour standards in children.
- Falling behaviour standards **can be explained** in terms of these key reasons. Firstly...

In response to 'What' part of task:

- A number of solutions **can be offered** with respect to changing children's behaviour.
- Improvements to a child's behaviour **can be achieved** in a variety of ways.

There is.../There are...

- **There are** numerous reasons/explanations **for** the deterioration in children's behaviour.
- **There is** a variety of **reasons why** children's behaviour is worsening/...**explanations for** the worsening behaviour of children.

Note: it is excellent if you can change the word forms/vocabulary given in the task wording when building your paragraphs. All of the above examples illustrate this.

Starting body paragraphs with extended topic sentences (using 'Even though...', 'Although...', 'who...', 'that...')

Using subordinate clauses helps to create longer, more detailed sentences.

Example

There are many parents **who believe that** kindness is by far the best way to improve behaviour among children.

Replacing simple connectors when developing paragraph ideas/examples

It's really tempting to use simple connectors like 'Firstly/Secondly/Thirdly/Finally' especially when you are under time pressure but usually this merely indicates a list rather than a commentary. Look at some alternative options for connecting different essay points:

Alternative options

There are various courses of action that can be taken to improve behaviour among children. **First and foremost,** children need to be taught firm boundaries of what is or isn't acceptable. **Another, important factor** concerns/involves/is... **Also of some significance** is... **All in all then...**

Finishing off your essay

A short conclusion helps to round off your essay, summarising what you have said without too much repetition.

Starting off the conclusion appropriately

These are the usual ways of beginning/signalling your concluding paragraph:

In conclusion, .../Summing up, .../To conclude, .../To summarise, .../All in all, ...

Using tenses appropriately in the conclusion

For Essay Type 4, the present continuous/progressive can work well if the topic is a **current** issue. When summarising the second part of the task a tense change is needed to mirror the task wording.

Example

- To summarise, children's behaviour **is worsening** largely because...
- In order to improve the situation, parenting skills **need to/should** become a compulsory school subject because...

Or, with a passive

- To improve the situation, better parenting skills **are required/are needed**.



For more tips on how to add fluency to your writing, give examples, form complex sentences and much more, go to:

'Grammar suggestions for all IELTS Task 2 essay types' on page 208.

Grammar Suggestions for all IELTS Task 2 Essay Types

The advice below may help with any of the four essay types.

Using 'reduced' clauses

This is a device for making your writing a little more fluent. Look at one or two examples and note that passive forms and '-ing' forms work best. The words in brackets are left out of the sentence but the grammar is still considered correct.

- **Parents** (*who are*) **looking after** more than one child often have to be more careful to treat each child similarly.
- **Children** (*who are*) **cared for** in families which are unstable, are more likely to develop poor behaviour.
- **Grandparents, if** (*they are*) **used** wisely, can be good models of appropriate behaviour.
- **The children** (*who were*) **given** sugary drinks were found to behave worse than other children.

Note: clauses are not usually reduced when the verb is in the present simple tense, the future tense, or the present/past perfect.

Referencing

In Task 2, referencing skills (meaning the use of little words to replace or 'refer back to' words used in previous sentences) are another effective way of maintaining fluency and economy, while avoiding repetition. Compare these two texts:



Text 1 - without referencing

Parents are responsible for their children's bad behaviour. Bad behaviour is learned, not genetically transmitted. Bad behaviour has negative, social consequences. The negative, social consequences often lead to a child feeling isolated or too 'different' from peers. Feeling isolated from peers may reduce the desire to fit in even more. Feeling isolated may reduce desire to 'fit in', and even worse behaviour may occur.



Text 2 - with referencing

Parents are responsible for their children's bad behaviour. **Such** behaviour is learned not genetically transmitted. **It** has negative, social consequences. **These** often lead to a child feeling isolated or too 'different' from peers. Feelings **like these** may further reduce the desire to 'fit in', **which** may lead to even worse behaviour.

Giving examples

It is a good idea to offer examples to illustrate your ideas/points/opinions; however, it's not a good idea to introduce every example repetitively, using 'For example' every time.

Read this range of options:

- Parents mould their children's behaviour by the way they conduct their own lives. **For instance**, parents who argue regularly may find that their child both imitates them and sees arguing as a successful life strategy.
- Parents shape their children's behaviour unconsciously, too. **For example**, a parent who never hugs a child, may unconsciously be communicating to the child that physical affection is not important.
- A young child can develop poor behaviour if parents fail to set and apply clear boundaries in areas **such as** bed times, eating times, and times for getting up in the morning.
- **Examples of** poor parenting might include failure to make clear to children the difference between right and wrong, and failure to model good behaviour.
- **One example of** poor parenting might involve punishing a child without explaining the reason for the punishment or without any consistency.
- Poor parenting is **easily exemplified in** the practice of inconsistent punishment.

Using modal forms to communicate a cautious viewpoint

Modals like 'may', 'might', 'could' are really helpful in preventing your own viewpoint from seeming over-confident, or even unreasonable. But, if you have a strongly-held opinion, writing directly is sometimes more honest.

Look at these:

- Parents **may well be** the most important shapers of a child's behaviour.
- Children **might behave** better if **there were** real consequences for poor behaviour.
- Schools **could teach** parenting skills as part of the core curriculum.

Now, compare with these:

- Parents **are** the most important shapers of a child's behaviour.
- Children **behave** better if there **are** real consequences for poor behaviour.
- Schools **must teach** parenting skills as part of the core curriculum.

Developing your ideas using other subordinate clause types

When time permits it helps your grammar score if you can use a variety of complex sentence forms appropriately and accurately to express, when, for example:

Giving Reasons

Children need good parenting **because/as/since** they too may be parents eventually.

Expressing Result

- Parents should teach their children good behaviour consistently **such that** they become responsible and caring adults.
- Good parenting is considered **so** important in some countries **that** it is now taught in schools.
- **As a result of** poor parenting, children often lack awareness of what is appropriate.

Expressing Purpose

- Children need to behave well **so that** they can learn how to fit into social groups.
- Parents need to learn parenting skills **in order to** raise standards of behaviour.

Expressing contrast

- Well-behaved children fit into society, **whereas/while** poorly-behaved children always struggle to be accepted.
- Well-behaved children fit into society; poorly behaved children, **however**, rarely do.
- Well-behaved children fit into society; **however**, poorly behaved children rarely do.
- Well-behaved children fit into society; poorly-behaved children, **on the other hand/in contrast**, rarely do.

Expressing degrees of similarity

- **Just as** well-behaved children need love, it is even **more likely that** poorly-behaved children also need to feel loved.
- All mothers need support; **equally**, all fathers need to feel supported in their role.
- Being a good parent is **as vital as** being a good son or daughter.
- Being a good parent is **(much/somewhat/considerably/a little) more** vital **than** being a good son or daughter.
- Having a polite child is **(much/somewhat/considerably/a little) less** important **than** a successful child.
- Being rich is **not (at all/quite/nearly) as** important **as** being a good parent.

Using 'if' clauses

'if' clauses can be useful when you need to state the conditions under which something might improve.

Read these:

- **If schools teach** parenting skills as an obligatory part of their curriculum then bad behaviour amongst children **will gradually decrease**.
- **If parents are taught** the most important principles of child rearing, then the behaviour of their sons and daughter **will obviously improve**.
- **If parents were forced** legally to guarantee financially the good behaviour of their children, then obviously careful parenting **would increase**.

Using 'unless' constructions

'Unless' is similar in meaning to 'If not' but useful for expressing the wish to avoid a negative situation in the future. Take a little look at this **example**:

Example

Unless children **are** shown good models of behaviour, it may well be that standards **will deteriorate** even further.

Using 'whether' constructions

'Whether' or 'whether or not' are very useful especially in the introduction or conclusion of an essay which asks you to discuss two points of view.

Look at the examples below:

- It is undeniably difficult to assess **whether** parents **or** schools are more responsible for the bad behaviour of children.
- **Whether or not** children's behaviour is getting worse is in itself probably debatable, but this essay will assume it to be so.
- **Whether** parents **or** schools should be held responsible for bad behaviour in children is an issue that relies very much on cultural context.

Developing your essay's ideas in other ways

As you develop your ideas and viewpoints, you may want to connect sentences using other expressions in order to signal what the sentences are doing. This shows variety and flexibility. Perhaps you want to...

...add something

- Parents could **also** apply their rules consistently.
- **In addition/Additionally/In addition to that/Moreover/Furthermore/What is more**, they could give their children real punishments for disobedience.

...express levels of probability

- **Without** better parenting, behaviour levels are bound **to/almost certain to/very likely to/likely to/quite likely to/perhaps likely to** deteriorate further.
- **Without** better parenting, **there is every likelihood/a major possibility/some likelihood/a small possibility that** behaviour levels will deteriorate further.
- **With** better parenting **there is little likelihood/no possibility/absolutely no likelihood that** behaviour levels will deteriorate further.

...express doubt and uncertainty

- **It seems unclear whether or not** behaviour will improve in the next decade.
- **It is doubtful that** behaviour will improve in the next decade.
- **There is uncertainty** about whether behaviour will improve in the future.
- **It is difficult to determine whether** bad behaviour is increasing in schools.
- **A lack of certainty surrounds** predictions of future behaviour.

Using adverbs as emphasis or as indicators of attitude

Adverbs (when used sparingly) are a really helpful way both of adding a sense of your own attitudes to ideas, and of adding emphasis. Compare these:

Without an ‘-ly’ adverb

Parenting is one of the most important tasks you’ll ever have in your life.

With an ‘-ly’ adverb

- **Obviously/Surely/Clearly/Actually/Certainly** parenting is one of the most important tasks you’ll ever have in your life.
- Parenting is **arguably/possibly/unquestionably/probably/definitely/indubitably/undeniably** one of the most important tasks you’ll ever have in your life.

This was a really detailed section, wasn’t it?

Time for a break! Do something relaxing now, and then tomorrow practice a Task 2 essay. As you practice more essays, try, little by little, to add some of the grammatical features here that fit each Task type. But, use the grammar to develop your own style of writing; don’t imitate the samples in this book too closely.

You WILL get better at writing, but please be patient. It’s better not to have unrealistic expectations or you might end up being ‘a patient’!



IELTS GRAMMAR — ARTICLES: INDEFINITE ('A'/'AN') AND DEFINITE ('THE')

In English the expression '**articles**' means either '**a**', '**an**', or '**the**'. Is that a deep sigh I can hear? If your first language doesn't have these little words, you will be finding them really tricky to learn. You have my full sympathy!

Articles are used in English to identify something or someone that can be counted (countable). A person or thing being talked about generally is usually considered **indefinite**; if being talked about in a more detailed or particular way then is usually considered **definite**.



Basic differences

'a' versus 'an'

Article	is used	for example
a	before nouns beginning with a consonant or consonant sound	a car, a number, a date, a hotel (<i>more natural than 'an hotel'</i>), a one-dollar coin
an	before a word beginning with a vowel sound	an export, an MP3 player, an economic problem an hour

'a' / 'an' versus 'the'

Article	is used	for example
a/an	to identify a thing or person that can be counted (e.g. 1,2,3 apples) but is not a particular (<i>i.e. is an 'indefinite' one</i>)	I want an apple (<i>any apple, or not a particular apple</i>)
the	with things that can usually be counted but to identify the object or person as a particular one (<i>a defined or 'definite' one</i>)	I want the apple in the fruit bowl. (<i>There's one fruit bowl, and it only has one particular, definite apple in it</i>) I want the green apple (<i>There's only one green apple (so it is a particular one); the other apples may be red</i>)

When to use 'a' / 'an'

1. If you want to mention a particular person or thing without detailed identification.

Examples: They live in **a new apartment**. (*I mention a simple, general fact for the first time*)
 He gave me **a watch**. (*I'm less interested in the make, more in the gift itself*)
 She married **an Ethiopian** (*I don't know his name, only where he's from*)

2. If you want to talk in a general way about a member of a professional or other group.

Examples: **A teacher** must be patient (*meaning all teachers/any teacher*)
A cow is more useful to humanity than **a dog** is. (*as a general rule, I believe this*)
 She's **an actress** (*she's a member of that profession; it's her job*)

3. Numbers.

'a' is used with 'round' numbers or with duration of time – such as 'a thousand', 'a hundred', 'an hour'.

Note: when the number is more complex 'one' is often preferred:

Examples: Three thousand one hundred (*not 'three thousand and a hundred'*).
 One thousand, six hundred and two (*not 'a thousand six hundred and two'*).

4. To specify things even if you don't normally count them.

Something you don't usually count is called 'uncountable'. For example, words like 'cream', 'heat', 'consumption', 'globalisation' are uncountable (*we don't say 'two consumptions' or 'two heats'*). Most uncountable words don't usually need articles.

Examples: I like cream in my coffee; Heat is necessary in order to boil water;
 Globalisation has increased international interaction

But... if the same expressions are **described in more detail**, 'a' or 'an' is sometimes used.

Example: The heater gives off **a heat** which is very dry.

'the' is usually necessary...**1. When two people both know the specific item or person they are talking about.**

Examples: Did you remember **the sunscreen**? (*the one usually in the bathroom at home*)
 Could you pass **the water**? (*the water jug is on the table at which they are sitting*)

2. When something has been previously mentioned (and thus is defined).

Examples: He has a **brother in Spain** and another in Thailand. **The brother in Spain** is a flamenco guitarist.
 There was **an increase** in 2012, but **the increase** that year was very small.

3. When there is only one.

If you write about something that is unique, use 'the'.

Examples: The earth, the moon, the world

Note: with countries 'the' is not normally used even though they are unique, unless they are made up of letters.

Examples: I love Japan and Korea (*not the Japan and the Korea*)
 I love **the UAE**, more than **the USA**.

4. When information is added that makes something more defined.

Examples: **The beauty** of a summer's day in Paris is unsurpassed.
 (*the non-count noun 'beauty' is described more definitely and so attracts 'the'*)
The group with incomes below \$50,000...
The economic problems of 21st century America are complex.

Even short expressions with 'of' require 'the', as in:

the number of passengers, **the length** of stay

5. When talking about the familiar, natural environment in which you live, and weather.

Examples: **The sea** is rough today.
 I can hear **the wind**.
 We live near **the mountains**.
The countryside is festooned with wild flowers at the moment.
The weather seems to be unusual for this time of year.

6. With most..., least..., ...-est.

When you use a superlative form, use 'the' before it.

Examples: **The largest** room has three windows.
Older people seem to have **the least free time** on average.
The most significant change in our shopping centre has been...

7. When talking about the peoples of particular nations or particular groups of people.

Examples: **The French** are often more outspoken than **the Finns**.
The blind receive more support than either **the deaf or the elderly**.

8. To identify a plural thing that is particular (defined).

Examples: She was supposed to deliver **the strawberries** this morning
(the particular strawberries ordered for delivery)
Those are not **the prices** we were given on the phone
(the prices that were previously specified)

Note: If you talk generally about plural things 'the' is not necessary.

Examples: **Strawberries** are good for you. *(all strawberries)*
Prices are going up *(prices of many things in general)*.

DON'T use articles...**1. After fixed expressions, often with prepositions.**

Examples: I first met him **at university**
He's **at work** every day until 5pm
I travel **by train** every day.
I **left home** when I was 20

2. After 'both' or 'all'.

Examples: Both kinds (*not usually 'both the kinds'*)
All three groups (*not usually 'all the three groups'*)

3. With possessive expressions.

Examples: John's coat (*not 'the John's coat'*)
Spain's economy (*not 'the Spain's economy'*)

4. With street names, towns, cities, states, lakes, famous town or city buildings.

Examples: Oxford Street, Wall Street
Bristol, Paris, British Columbia
Lake Titicaca
Cambridge University, Sydney Airport, London Zoo
Westminster Cathedral

*Note: art galleries take 'The' as in **The National Gallery**, **The Louvre**.*

Typical examples of 'a' / 'the' in General Training Task 1 answers

I bought **an iPad** from your shop yesterday. When I returned home it didn't work.
I'd like you to exchange **the iPad** I bought for a different one.

Comment: second mention of 'iPad' requires 'the' as it has now been defined.

Note: The underlined words signal that greater definition is being given to the preceding noun by adding more information about it.

The tree with large leaves is blocking **the light** in my garden.

I'd be most grateful if you could offer me **a refund**.

I interested in getting **a job** in your organisation.

Comment: 'job' is not specified - the writer means **any** suitable job in that particular organisation.

I am interested in **the job** advertised in the local paper yesterday.

Comment: There is only one job - the one advertised yesterday.

You will enjoy seeing **the Acropolis** and **the Parthenon** when you visit us in Athens.

The cost of flights to Cairo is much less in Spring.

The intelligence of your sales staff seems to be somewhat limited.

You will find **a vacuum cleaner** in the cupboard.

Comment: There may be more than one cleaner in the house, or the writer is not familiar with the cleaner, only with the location of it.

The vacuum cleaner is in the cupboard.

Comment: It's the only one in the house, or it belongs to the writer.

I've visited Westminster Cathedral, but not **the Houses** of Parliament or **the Louvre**.

Do you now know your 'a' from your 'the' now?

The only acceptable answer is **a** cautious 'yes', **an** affirmative.

The IELTS test will be **a** chance to show what you have learnt!



IELTS GRAMMAR – PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions in English are a real nightmare, aren't they?!

Whether you are writing an IELTS Task 1 letter or a Task 2 essay, you need to be as careful as you can with prepositions.



Prepositions and time expressions

'At' – for times and night/dawn

At 5.30pm/at midnight/at noon/at night/at dawn

'Between' – for years

Between 2010 and 2012, for the years **between** 1990 and 2010, the statistics were...

'By' – for months/years/seasons/most parts of the day

By 2012/By September/2012 (*when writing about a series of months/years*)

'In' – for months/years/seasons/most parts of the day

In April/In 2012/In Spring/In the evening/...morning/...afternoon

'On' – for days/dates

On Monday/on the 6th

Prepositions (and one or two adverbs) for **STRETCHES** of time

She has been in France **since** 1999. (*She went there in 1999 and has not returned*)

I'm going on holiday to Florence **for** three weeks. (*I will spend three weeks in Florence*)

The exhibition lasted **from** September **to** December. (*It began in September and ended in December*)

The construction program will last **from** summer **until** spring. (*It will start in summer and will end in spring*)

I fell asleep **during** the performance. (*I was asleep for some part of the performance*)

He has to pay the fine **within** a month. (*No longer than a month*)

'A kaleidoscope' of prepositions with the word 'time'

I was **in time** for my interview.

At that time I was unemployed.

I always try to be **on time** for appointments.

Pain heals **with time/over time**.

From time to time/At times I get bored with my job.

I'll keep working **for the time being/for a long time**.

By the time you read this, I'll be in Istanbul.

Prepositions that are followed by “-ing” expressions

About

I'm **excited about** starting my new job.
They're **pleased about** moving to a new house.
She's **sad about** leaving her family.

At

I was **disappointed at** failing the driving test again.
I'm afraid I'm **not very good at** keeping my own accounts.
He's **useless at** cooking Italian food.
She's really **good at** making speeches.

By

He paid for it **by working** every night for 3 months.
By concentrating on preparing for the test, I improved my score.
I think it was **by living** cheaply that I was able to stay overseas for so long.

For

Thank you for letting me stay.
He's **responsible for** arranging the accommodation.

In

I'm **interested in** buying your car.

Of

I don't like **the idea of** travelling by plane.
I'm **fed up of** arguing with you.
I'm **tired of** going to the same restaurant.
He's **frightened of** losing his job.

On

They always **insist on** giving us meat to eat.
She's so **keen on** moving to New Zealand.

To

I **look forward to** hearing from you soon.

Preposition sandwiches

There are many useful expressions for letter writing which have a preposition at both ends!

She's **in trouble with** her boss.

She's **in fear of** losing her job.

He knows she's **on good terms with** her colleagues.

He wants her to be **in charge of** the redundancy program.

She's **at odds with** her colleagues on this issue.

But she's **in tune with** management on the need for greater efficiency.

I joined the company's social club **in the hope of** making new friends.

The manager was **at pains to** remind me of the poor salary.

But later he said I was **in line for** promotion.

Because of the low salary, I was **on the verge of** leaving.

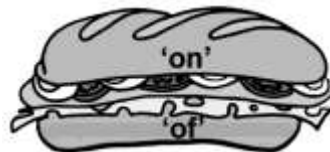
But **for the sake of** my colleagues, I stayed.

Also I was **in love with** one of my co-workers.

Later, I got **in touch with** an old friend, whom I had always been **in awe of** because of his great ambition.

Out of respect for this friend I sent my resume.

He wrote back saying: **In answer to/ With respect to / With reference to / With regard to** your letter and **by virtue of / on account of** our friendship, and **for reasons of** expediency I want you to work for me. You'll soon get **on top of** things here and become **up to date with** our processes, even though right now, you may feel a bit **out of touch with** the new technology. Welcome aboard.



Two colloquial examples:

That dress is **to die for**.

I'm pretty much **in synch with** the way they do things.

Common verb forms + prepositions

Preposition

Examples of use

On

To stand on

You should learn to **stand on** your own two feet.

To rely on

We **rely on** my wife's income.

To spend on

I **spend** very little **on** luxuries.

To

To listen to

It's better if you **listen to** instructions carefully.

To complain to

I **complained to** the police.

To attend to

I'll **attend to** your problem in a moment.

In

To live in

Many people **live in** poverty.

To settle in

It didn't take long to **settle in** to our new house.

To send in

Please **send in** your resume.

Preposition**Examples of use****With**

To play with
To help with
To assist with

I often **play with** my mobile phone applications.
She **helps with** the cooking at the retirement home.
The government **assists with** relocation costs.

By

To stand by
To travel by
To get by

I'll **stand by** the entrance and wait for you there.
We always **travel by** train.
Although we are not well paid, we manage to **get by**.

For

To ask for
To look for
To come for

I'm going to **ask for** a pay rise.
I've been **looking for** my passport everywhere.
I've **come for** the money you owe me.

About

To talk about
To hear about
To worry about
To know about

We must **talk about** this new problem.
I **heard about** your accident.
I'm **worried about** my health.
I **know about** your situation.

At

To laugh at
To stare at
To glare at

It's too easy to **laugh at** other people.
It's not polite to **stare at** others.
When I overtook him in my new car, he **glared at** me.

From

To suffer from
To hear from
To leave from

This country **suffers from** too much unemployment.
I haven't **heard from** my brother for ages.
The train **leaves from** the main station.

Of

To remind of
To think of

This town **reminds me of** home.
I'll be **thinking of** you when I'm on the cruise/ What do you **think of** the new iPad? (*Note: the second example means 'What is your opinion of...?'*)

Prepositions for ways of getting around

By plane/by car/by train/by bicycle/by taxi/by boat/by camel
on foot/on horseback

Some useful adjectives + prepositions

Expression	Example of use
angry with	I'm not angry with you, but I am annoyed.
annoyed about/at	I'm annoyed about the damage to my computer.
aware of	You may not be aware of the problem.
blind to	I'm certainly not blind to your abilities as a manager.
comfortable with	I'm not comfortable with the way they treat their customers.
concerned about	I'm concerned about your behaviour.
confident in	We are confident in your ability to give us sound financial advice.
crazy about	I'm crazy about Russian folk music (<i>informal</i>).
curious about/to	I'm curious about the origin of your name/I'm curious to know more about it.
dependent on	I'm still dependent on my parents for financial support.
hungry for	I'm hungry for new experiences.
interested in	I'm interested in doing a PhD at Harvard.
keen on	I'm keen on travelling to Antarctica to study the penguins.
mad about	I'm mad about tennis (<i>informal</i>).
nice to	She's seldom nice to her little brother.
pleased with	I'm pleased with the new dress I bought.
polite to	He's always polite to the customers.
rude to	It's not a good idea to be rude to your work colleagues.
satisfied with	Overall, they were satisfied with my progress.
sorry about/for	We are sorry about the delay you experienced/I feel sorry for his wife.
surprised at	I'm surprised at your attitude.
tired of	I'm tired of your constant complaints.
wrong with	There's something wrong with my computer.

Prepositions and passive forms

The most common preposition with passive forms is 'by'.

Examples: I was **taught** the piano **by my mother**.
This novel **was written by Steinbeck**.

But there are **other examples:** I don't like being **laughed at**.
(*Note: 'by' can follow, as in, 'I don't like being laughed at by my friends'.*)
He was **operated on** last night.
This bed looks **slept in**.
The movie star was tired of being **looked at**.

Other common uses of prepositions

What's **on TV**?

He is **under age**, and can't watch this movie, I'm afraid.

I feel a bit **under the weather**, so I'd like to postpone our meeting until next week.

I was **under the impression** that you had gone overseas.

She didn't break the plate **on purpose**.

On balance, I'm satisfied with my job.

The photo is **on page 10**.

A few, common phrasal prepositional forms

I don't **get on with** my parents because they are always critical of my lifestyle.

I'll **look out for** you when I arrive.

She tries **to get by on** less than \$300 a week.

I need **to find out about** accommodation options in Bulgaria.

I can't **go along with** your analysis of the situation, I'm afraid.

Describing objects in detail, using prepositions

It's possible you may be asked to describe an article that you lost or was damaged and so you need to use prepositions carefully.

- Examples:**
- It is a green suitcase **with** a black leather handle.
 - There is a grease mark **on the front of** the jacket.
 - On the back of** the parcel is my address.
 - Down the side of** the sofa is a large tear.
 - In the corner of** the room **just below** the ceiling there is a damp mark.
 - The vase is in the entertainment unit, **right beside** the TV.
 - The hotel was located **right opposite/right next to** a noisy night club.

Prepositions of position

Q. Where's your ball?

A. It's... **on** the table, ...**under** the table, ...**on top of** the cupboard, ...**inside** the bag, ...**behind** the door, ...**in** the hedge, ...**next to** the tennis racket, ...**at** the corner of the street, ...**over** the road. Actually, I've lost all eight of them! Pretty careless, eh?!



Q. Where do you live?

A. I live... **opposite** the shopping centre, ...**next to** the church, ...**between** the hotel **and** the park, ... **among** the trees, ...**near** the school, ...**by** the police station, ...**below** the water in a submarine, ...**beneath** the branches of that huge tree, ...**underneath** that huge umbrella. In fact, I suppose I live just about anywhere and everywhere!

Position of prepositions

Position of prepositions can sometimes affect the level of formality.

Examples: **With whom** did you go? (*more formal*)

Who did you go **with**? (*less formal*)

About which person are you **talking**? (*more formal*)

 Which person are you **talking about**? (*less formal*)

 It's a great place **in which to live**. (*more formal*)

 It's a great place **to live in**. (*less formal*)

 (*Note: 'It's a great place to live' is also used*)

Feeling better now? Oh dear, so you're still feeling sick...I see...but only sick of grammar! Oh well, never mind. Have an early night and then practice writing IELTS letters or essays using some of the grammar in my various 'Writing Doc' sections. This will make you better prepared for the IELTS writing test. Write accurately and appropriately, of course! Trust the writing doctor!



IELTS VOCABULARY — WRITING TASK 1

Hello there! Welcome to the General Training Vocabulary resource section. Although I can't offer you every word or phrase you might need for Task 1 in the test, I have tried to choose some of the more common general topics that occur in letters and have offered you a range of potentially helpful expressions. I hope these may also give you a few ideas to use in Task 1 letters.

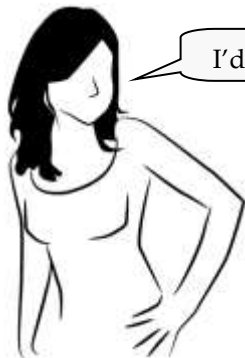


Vocabulary linked to the letter's topic and purpose

Banks, bills and money



Banks



I'd like to...

- ... apply for a loan/...borrow some money/...take out/pay back a loan
- ... set up a bank account/a savings account/a deposit account
- ... apply for a credit card/...reset my password/...change my pin number/...set a credit limit
- ... pay off my overdraft/...reduce my bank fees/...find an ATM machine/a cash machine

Bills

I'm always struggling to ...

... pay the bills/the weekly food bill/the electricity/water/gas/phone bill

Sometimes I ...

... have trouble paying the bills/...get behind on my bills/...pay my bills late/
... borrow money from my brother, but I always promise to pay him back/repay him.

Attitudes to money



I'm often...

... squeezed for money/broke/penniless

and have...

... money worries/...money troubles

and I'm certainly not...

... comfortably off/well-off/rolling in money/
made of money/filthy rich/mega-rich

In fact, occasionally I have to...

... live like a pauper/...scrounge off other people/...live on next to nothing

But it's in my nature to...

... be generous/... live beyond my means/...spend money like water/...live for the moment/...throw my money around as if there is no tomorrow/...waste my money

My brother, on the other hand...

... lives within his means/...is careful with money/...is a scrooge with money/...is tight-fisted/...is a miser/...counts every penny/...squirrels his money away

I just say to him that...

... money isn't everything/...money doesn't buy you happiness/...easy come, easy go

But he just laughs and replies that...

... money opens doors/...every cent counts/ ... money is power/...he lets his money do the talking/...you have to make your money work for you

But he would, wouldn't he, because, unlike me, he's...

... made of money/used to making money

Still, I suppose I'll definitely have to...

... cut down on.../...cut back on.../ ... spend less on... all those little luxuries

even though...

... any money I get is always burning a hole in my pocket*
Note * This means you can't wait to spend it.



Saving



I'll have to build up my...

... pocket money/savings/nest egg

and start to...

... save up for.../...put some money aside for.../
 ... monitor my weekly expenditure/

... watch the cost of living

Buying or renting?

I'd really like to...	... buy a house/...take out a mortgage on a house/...invest in property
and be...	... asset rich instead of cash poor...
but at the moment I have to...	... pay rent/excessive rent ... rent a room/an apartment/ a house
Actually, my landlord has just announced...	... a huge rent rise/a rent increase
so I may have to...	... appeal to the rent tribunal/...contact the estate agent



The later years

One day when I'm rich and old, I'll...	... make a will/...leave all my money to a cats' home...
If I'm lucky before that, I may...	... inherit a house when my relatives die/...build up a good pension/...accumulate a healthy superannuation lump sum/ ... retire on a government pension
but, no doubt I would just...	... squander my inheritance. Such is life!

Complaining about a neighbour



I am writing...	... to complain about... ... to make a complaint about... ... a complaint about excessive noise/noisy parties late at night which is/are affecting my sleep/making it impossible for me to get any sleep
I would be most grateful if you would stop...	... tipping your rubbish into my garden ... parking your car in front of my driveway ... letting your children come into my garden ... mowing your grass at 6 am in the morning
I am tired of you...	... throwing rubbish into my garden so please dispose of your rubbish responsibly and take responsibility for your own waste
I suggest that you...	... take your rubbish to a recycling centre

Complaining about a neighbour's pets

Every time I walk out of my house/apartment...

... your dog/cat tries to bite me/my child

It seems to me that...

... you don't look after your dog/cat properly
 ... your dog is barking constantly
 ... your cat is uncontrollable
 ... your dog is untrained
 ... your parrot is always squawking



Moreover,...

... your dog is constantly fouling the pavement
 ... your cat is always hunting and killing little birds

I think...

... your dog/cat is destroying all the plants in our garden
 ... you should keep your dog on a lead, otherwise, I'll have no alternative but to contact the police

Shopping



The appliance you sold me is faulty so...

... I'd like a refund.
 ... I'm writing to see if you are/might be willing to exchange it for a new one.
 The reason is simple...it doesn't work.

Also, the size/the shape/the colour/the range of functions is unsuitable.
 Luckily, there is a one-year guarantee/warranty on this item.

I'm afraid...

... the warranty period has expired/...we have run out of that model

I have to say that ...

... the service in this store is appalling/mediocre/excellent

I'd very much like to know if...

... you still stock that model/...you have that model in stock currently

Could you let me know your...

... opening hours/closing hours?
 The shop is open from... to...

The problem is that...

... the battery is missing/...the switch has broken/...a part/a component is missing/...it's defective/...we've sold out of that item

I now prefer...

... shopping online/...the convenience of shopping on the internet

I would like to pay...	... by credit card/debit card/ ... in cash/by cheque/with a gift token
I'd like to know if I can pay...	... a deposit/the balance on the deposit later/in monthly instalments, or just make a small down payment
Is it possible for you to...	... reserve the item?/put the item on lay by?/put the item on one side for me?
The store offers...	... summer sales/...plenty of bargains at 'giveaway' prices/discounted prices
but not...	... poor quality goods at exorbitant prices/excessive prices



Holidays and travel

	I'd like some information about...	... domestic flights to.../international flights to...
	and to find out about...	... outward flights on the fifth.../return flights on or around...
	It would be helpful to know about...	... the cancellation charges/the refund policy
I think I'd prefer...	... a stopover/a non-stop flight/the shortest flight time/to overnight at... ... a one-way/return flight/ticket	
I'd like to know if it is necessary to...	... book a ticket/...book accommodation beforehand	
I'd prefer...	... a good quality airline/...a low-cost charter flight/ ... a local airline ... a cruise/an all-in holiday/a guided tour	
I usually travel...	... by train/by taxi/by boat/by bus	
The type of holiday I'm looking for is...	... a backpacking holiday across America/around Europe ... an adventure holiday/a study holiday	



It's a good idea to...	... change money/...take out travel insurance ... pack your suitcase/...keep within the baggage allowance/...take a carry-on bag
At the airport you have to...	... check in/...go to the gate/...board the aircraft/...depart on time
The airline offers...	... in-flight entertainment/flight attendants/a good level/standard of service/duty free goods
Before departure, or on arrival you have to...	... pass through customs/...collect your baggage from the carousel ... have a current visa/a current passport which is valid for more than six months ... check that your visa is not out of date
I'd like to book...	... an excursion to.../a day trip to.../a half-day tour to historical monuments/museums/art galleries/the ruins/the cathedral/the castle/the main square
The city has...	... winding streets/cobbled streets/dark alleys/knick-knack shops/souvenir shops/handmade goods/lively street cafes
It's OK to...	... barter/...take photos of.../... eat the local food/... ask for help
but be careful not to get...	... lost/sick/swindled out of your money/robbed/mugged
Unfortunately...	... my luggage was damaged/...the flight was cancelled/...the hotel was overbooked
It is...	... a popular resort/an upmarket resort/a cheap resort/a quaint village/a popular night spot/a lesser known part of the city/away from the tourists/picturesque areas
The resort has...	... pristine beaches/crowded beaches/colourful, local fishermen/luxury apartments
but also...	... a fair amount of squalor/a dangerous downtown area/very few public conveniences
Our company is prominent in the...	... tourist industry and we have many travel agencies which offer discount travel/bargain holidays/luxury cruises/weekend breaks/cheap flights



Accommodation



I would like to stay in...

... a luxury hotel/a three-star hotel/a cheap hotel/a guest house/bed and breakfast accommodation/an apartment/a backpacker hostel/a caravan/a motor home/a tent, or maybe sleep in the open air/sleep under the stars

When you arrive you usually have to...

... check in/... register/...get the keys to your room/
... phone room service/... unpack

You can use...

... the hotel swimming pool/the fitness room/the hotel coffee shop

I'm staying...

... full board/half board/bed and breakfast

but...

... meals are not included in the price and I will be charged extra for ...
a room with its own bathroom/a single room/a double room/
a family room/a room with a view of.../I don't want...
a dormitory/...to share a bathroom/I prefer excellent facilities

The price/room rate includes...

... a buffet breakfast/full breakfast/continental breakfast/
tea and coffee-making facilities

It's cheaper...

... in the low season/out of season, as there are usually more vacancies

When it's half-empty...

... there are special deals/bargain rates

At the reception desk you can ask about...

... a safety deposit box/the concierge/
the bell boy/the lifts

You'll need to make a note of...

... the checkout time/any extra charges/the room rate per person

I really enjoy...

... cooking over a camp fire/sleeping under the stars/
packing my rucksack

but I don't want...

... to be attacked by insects/to be bitten by mosquitoes/
to sleep on hard ground

When I go camping I seem to...

... have trouble keeping warm/...feel the cold/...get soaked to the skin/...suffer from backache/...keep waking up/...hear strange noises/...have no hot water

You need...

... to pitch the tent on flat ground/... to pack everything up neatly
/...to collect wood for the fire/...a powerful torch/...walking boots/...a
lightweight sleeping bag/...an inflatable mattress/...insect-repellent/...warm gloves/...rainproof clothing/...a compass



Staying in someone's house



It's a big responsibility to...

... look after someone's house/...house sit/
... be invited to stay at...

but, I have offered to...

... feed the pets/...water the garden/...keep an eye on.../...look out for the.../
... sleep in the guest room/...collect the mail/
... take the dog for a walk/...lock up/
... switch off everything before I go out/...clean the house from top to bottom before I leave

I'm afraid I was unable to...

... locate the/activate the alarm system/...turn on the watering system/
... work out how to use the dishwasher/
washing machine/cooker/television remote

I like to...

... help out with the cleaning/...leave everything just as I found it

I will leave...

... a list of dos and don'ts/a list of useful contacts

If you have any trouble...

... call the security company/...don't hesitate to call me/...send me a text message

Thank you so much for...

... letting me stay in your fantastic house/...looking after my house so well/...leaving the house in spotless condition/ ...leaving everything spick and span

Describing character/personality



He's...

...really/very/extremely pleasant/kind/talented/
lively/energetic/active/unassuming/sensitive/
enthusiastic/focused/easy-going/hard-working

whereas, she's...

... quite/rather/a bit/somewhat...
... difficult/unfriendly/uncooperative/lazy/diffident/
careless/unmotivated/ordinary/
down in the mouth/negative/cynical

My mum's...

... a bundle of energy/ generous to a fault/
a breath of fresh air/a star

She...

... will do anything for you/to help

My dad, on the other hand is...

... a bit of a dead loss/a workaholic/a liability/retired

My best friend's...

... a real saint/a rare find/a good catch/one in a million/
a treasure/very independent/self-motivated/super-efficient/
extra special/multi-talented

Though sometimes,
she's...

... impolite/clueless/unmotivated/eccentric/downright rude/accident-
prone/antisocial/ hyperactive/over-rated/at a loose end

Such a pity, though,
that my dad's so...

... under-valued/misunderstood

Me? I'm just ME, I
suppose!

The workplace



I'm going to...

... apply for a job/...complete the application
form/...submit my application

I hope I get....

... invited for an interview/...appointed to the
job

I'd prefer to work...

... part-time/...full time/...overtime/...two days a week/
... as an assistant to...
... in the same department as.../...alongside Ms ...

Could you let me know
the

... pay rate/hourly rate/salary/wage

It's important for me to...

... earn an income/...be paid fortnightly/weekly/monthly
... receive back pay/holiday pay/... take annual leave

but not be either...

... overpaid or underpaid/fired/sacked

The manager has informed
me that you wish to...

... resign/hand in your resignation/quit* (*American English*)
... be promoted/... move sideways/... be demoted

I hear that you...

... get on well with your boss/manager/workmates/colleagues
... tend to clash with your boss over.../are in dispute with the company
about.../... work hard/...overwork/...can't cope with the working
hours/... do shift work/...used to work a 40-hour week

You might try to...

... do voluntary work/... get work experience/... train as a.../
... get work as a...

Usually, I...

... get to work at.../...leave work at.../...travel to work by...

At the moment, I'm...

... working on a project/...collaborating with.../
 ... working alongside (Dr. Jones)...
 ... working long hours/...often tired after work/...enjoying my job/...finding my job boring/repetitive/...looking for a job with good prospects, not a dead-end job

People tell me that I should...

... be ambitious/...work for myself/...start my own business/...get to the top/
 ... find a steady job/
 ... try not to end up unemployed/
 ... avoid being out of work/
 ... not become unemployable



Ask yourself whether you...

... enjoy physical work more than brain work/...want a sedentary occupation/a varied job/want to work for an international company/ to run your own business

The neighbourhood



We live in...

... a run-down/a new/a very quiet/a dangerous neighbourhood

Ours is...

... a multiracial community/an ethnically diverse neighbourhood

It has...

... busy streets/traffic noise/...the constant sound of traffic/tree-lined streets

I've never met ...

... my next-door neighbour/the people who live over the road/down the road/next door

Our house is...

... within walking distance of the shopping centre/near a tram stop/ a bus stop/a train station/a bicycle lane/apartment blocks/several parks

In our neighbourhood you can find...

... detached houses/terraced houses/semi-detached houses/a corner shop/a local market/newspaper kiosks/street musicians/beggars/food stalls/a lively nightlife/stray dogs/litter in the streets/funky restaurants

Sometimes, I...

... talk to my neighbours/...fall out with my neighbours/...go for a walk in the local park/...ask my neighbours for help

It's a pity there are...	... noisy parties/...neighbourhood disputes
because these...	... give the neighbourhood a bad name/...give the neighbourhood a bad reputation
It used to be...	... a quiet area, but... the neighbourhood has changed dramatically since...
They should try...	... to make the neighbourhood safer for children/...having a street party
We...	... have just moved into the neighbourhood because it's the sort of neighbourhood that attracts.../ the most prestigious neighbourhood in the city/and it now has a neighbourhood watch scheme



Joining clubs and organisations



I'd like to...	... join the local (tennis) club/...apply to join the local (tennis) club
I know I'll have to pay...	... membership fees/...annual club fees
The club is always trying...	... to attract new members/...to welcome new members/...not to lose members/...to advertise for new members
From what I understand...	... club meetings are held monthly/weekly/most weeks
and there is...	... a club committee which...decides club policy/...organises fund-raising events/an annual general meeting/...makes club rules/ ... elects the club chairman/president/secretary/ ... holds a club raffle
In terms of facilities, there is...	... a club social room/plenty of catering equipment
They are always looking for volunteers to...	... help out with.../... organise.../ ... put their hand up for.../... offer their services to the club
Our club is an exclusive club/an upmarket club
My friend seems to...	... spend all his spare time at the club/...devote a great deal of time to the club



Telecommunications

Phones



- I couldn't survive without my... ... mobile phone/cell phone/iPad/iPhone
- My new phone has loads of... ... apps./applications/features/functions/ring tones
- It's cheaper to... ... send text messages/Skype

- Sometimes I find my phone... ... has a weak signal/...is out of range
- and usually I make... ... long distance phone calls/international calls from a landline using my phone card
- I hate it when the phone battery runs down / needs re-charging
- Once I... ... lost my phone/phone charger/...had my phone stolen
- I dislike hearing... ... people using their cell phones on trains/...a phone ringing in the middle of a movie
- I have a good... ... phone plan to keep call costs down





Internet



- I use the Internet to search for/look up information/to do my emailing/...for social networking/ ... to keep up with friends/news/ ... to go on Facebook/...to tweet/...to view YouTube
- I have my own... ... website/e-commerce website/website address

- and luckily I found a... ... reasonably-priced Internet Service Provider (ISP)
- There seem to be lots of... ... dodgy websites/unreliable websites/bogus websites/online scams

<p>At first I had to...</p>	<p>... set up an email account/address/ ... choose a password/...log-in</p>	
<p>But soon I got used to...</p>	<p>... checking my messages/...clearing my inbox/...deleting spam/...pressing the 'send' button/...going through my messages/...emptying my mailbox/ ... opening my mail/...downloading files/...uploading files/...buying online/ SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)</p>	
<p>For travelling, I bought...</p>	<p>... a netbook/a notebook/an iPad/a tablet</p>	
<p>having made sure they had...</p>	<p>... sufficient memory/adequate battery life/enough RAM</p>	
<p>These days, you need every...</p>	<p>... gigabyte/megabyte/kilobyte/byte you can get</p>	
<p>Sometimes I worry about...</p>	<p>... privacy issues/...getting hacked/...becoming technophobic</p>	
<p>and I make sure I...</p>	<p>... back my data up regularly/... use a memory stick/flash drive</p>	
<p>but, it's sometimes expensive to buy...</p>	<p>... upgrades/good scanners/laser printers/printer cartridges</p>	
<p>I get really frustrated when...</p>	<p>... my printer jams/the computer crashes/the connection drops out/the line is busy</p>	
<p>Like most people, though, I just can't do without all these...</p>	<p>... electronic gadgets/electronic gizmos/electronic devices</p>	

TV and entertainment

TV




I've found that my...


... digital TV is less flexible than my tablet, and less energy-efficient

With all these pay TV channels there are too many...

... reality TV shows/quiz programs/police dramas/lifestyle programs/wildlife programs/movies/news and current affairs programs/game shows/soap operas

So, I seem to spend too much time...	... channel hopping/...changing channels/...fiddling with the remote	
I get really weary of all the...	... adverts/repeats/imported shows/old movies/cooking shows	
It's so helpful these days to have...	... teletext and subtitles, but I still use the printed TV Guide sometimes	
I suppose I watch too much TV but I'm not really...	... a telly addict/...a couch potato/or someone who just sits in front of the telly all day	

Cinema/DVD

	I prefer going to watch a good movie, especially...	... science fiction/action movies/a light, romantic comedy/a good thriller/a Hollywood blockbuster/any movie starring _____/ recent foreign movies/independent movies
	I also like the convenience of...	... checking performance times online/ ... multi-screen theatres
and enjoy the technology of...		... 3D movies/surround sound/split screen/modern sound systems
I think most actors these days...		... give good performances/...enjoy celebrity status
but are often...		... overpaid/overrated/narcissistic/obsessed with body image/ too much in the limelight
Actually, I enjoy the atmosphere of...		... live theatre performances/live music concerts
and I now have quite a large...		... DVD collection/digital music collection
which I watch on...		... my home theatre/DVD player/portable DVD player
I have to confess that sometimes I also...		... watch movies online/...download movies/pirated copies, but don't tell anyone, will you!

I hope you aren't feeling overwhelmed by all this vocabulary? Treat this section like a gold mine ...full of valuable things but not a place in which to spend all your time! Look for fresh expressions when you are practicing IELTS Task 1 letters. Aim to build variety of appropriate vocabulary to improve your chances of a higher score.



IELTS VOCABULARY — WRITING TASK 2

Writing Task 2 places different kinds of demand on your language skills, and involves, of course, an ability to justify your point of view by developing ideas and examples based on your own knowledge of social issues.

Varied and appropriate use of vocabulary is vital to the development, clarity and precision of your ideas, especially as your Task 2 score carries more weight than Task 1.

Let's have a little look at some options for enriching your use of vocabulary.
Are you ready?



Expressions for the Introduction paragraph

Of course, the topic of the essay will determine some of the vocabulary used in the early sentences; however, it is useful to have a range of options when stating what the essay is going to do or what view it will try to put forward.

Essay Type 1 — Indicate and Support Your Level of Agreement

(Essay topic)... is a **significant/major/an ongoing issue/growing problem/issue/a challenging dilemma in the modern world/in a globalised world/nowadays/currently/these days**.

Tackling/Addressing/Solving/Making headway with this issue is **challenging/complex** especially **given limited resources/the pressure of modern life/the speed of social change**.

Some believe/are of the opinion that...; others suggest that.../point to the fact that.../are convinced that...

This essay **will express/articulate** its **full agreement** with this view **and will offer/indicate/suggest/put forward/outline** reasons for this position/**argue/justify** this **position/stance/standpoint**.

This essay **will agree/accord in part** with ..., and **will ...**

This essay **will express/assert its complete disagreement** with ... and ...

Essay Type 2 — Present a two-sided Discussion

This essay **will discuss/explore/examine** both points of view and **then offer/present** a personal **view/viewpoint/perspective/on this dilemma/issue/situation**.

Both **standpoints/perspectives** will be **analysed/scrutinised** and then a **personal slant/take** on the issue will be **put forward/advanced**.

Essay Type 3 — Discuss Advantages & Disadvantages

There are **numerous/a range of/various/a plethora of/a myriad...** pros and cons/benefits and pitfalls/positive and negative aspects ...with regard to/in terms of/with respect to/ regarding... (*Essay topic*)

One **clear/definite/obvious/unequivocal/indisputable/undisputed/advantage** of...

Essay Type 4 — Explain & offer Solutions or Consequences

This essay **will explain/outline/offer/identify/nominate/highlight** some key reasons why (*Essay topic*) is ... and **will suggest/will propose** what can be done.../(someone/some organisation) should do.../a range of **measures/steps** that can be taken to improve the situation/**some options/possibilities** for **improving/changing** the situation.

...will **identify/propose/briefly highlight**... one or two/just a few... **likely/potential/probable/possible...** consequences/knock-on effects/outcomes of...

Finishing off your essay

Sometimes the final sentence can be used to make a final comment or to offer an interesting thought or prediction. This is a final chance to brighten up the vocabulary.

It remains to be seen whether or not.../if...

What the **future holds is a mystery**, but it may well be that...

Looking into my own crystal ball, I would predict that...

It will be **fascinating to see/intriguing to see** if...

In the short term... will probably... ; **in the long term**, the situation seems far less predictable...

Choosing topic vocabulary for the body paragraphs

One of the challenges of Task 2 is that you have no idea what the topic is going to be about. It could be on almost anything. We have tried to put together some vocabulary resources on typical topic areas.

One of the reasons why some IELTS candidates have difficulty in achieving a higher vocabulary score is that they know some individual words but can't always use them naturally, because they don't know the collocations (the other words that usually 'go with' the word they may know) that help to make the vocabulary appropriate and fluent.

You will notice that although we occasionally use single words, most of the time we offer expressions which involve collocation, or even sentences. This is both to give you some possible ideas for topic content and to help you build 'natural-sounding' vocabulary strings. We have also put many verb forms together in their infinitive form under 'T' for ease of access. Hope this works for you.



Topic vocabulary for the body paragraphs (all essay types)



A Animals :: Pets

A aggressive dogs

B being bitten by a dog

C (*the*) cost of keeping a pet

E exercising a dog sufficiently
exotic pets

G guard dogs
guide dogs

L losing interest in your pet

N (*a*) nation of dog lovers
(*the*) need to commit time to
looking after a pet
neglecting a pet

O obedience training

P pet food
pets as companions
preferring pets to people

T taking a dog for a walk
to abandon a pet
to give a pet away
to treat a pet like a child
to underestimate the impact of pet
ownership

U unusual pets

V veterinary fees

Animals :: Animal protection

A anti-ageing products

B bears

C cosmetics

E endangered species

I (*the*) illegal export of animals
(*the*) illegal trade in...

L (*the*) loss of natural habitat

M maintaining numbers

N national parks

P park rangers to protect
animals from poachers

R rhinoceros horn

S selling rare species on the black
market

T to prioritise the wellbeing of
endangered species
to trade illegally in exotic species

U (*the*) use of animal parts in
traditional medicine

W (*the*) World Wildlife Fund

Animals :: Zoos

A animals showing signs of boredom
B being attacked by an animal
 breeding program
C cooperation between zoos
D (*the*) difficulty of reproducing
E each animal's natural habitat
 (*an*) escaped animal

G giving large animals enough
 space to roam freely
K keeping children entertained
M maintaining public interest
R restricted enclosures

S safety issues in zoos
 school visits
 souvenirs
U (*the*) upkeep of a zoo is expensive
Z (*a*) zookeeper
 zoos' educational programs

B Books and Reading

A autobiographies
B biographies
 (*a*) bookshop
C (*the*) classical works of fiction
 cooking books
D detective stories
E (*an*) e-book
 encouraging children to read
F fiction
I it's a book about...
L literary treasures
 (*a/the*) local library

N non fiction
 novels
P (*a*) page-turner (*means – a book that really makes you want to keep reading*)
 plays
 poetry
R reading a book on a tablet
 reading a book takes too long
 reading an actual book
 reading for pleasure
 (*the*) reading habit
 reading has lost some popularity
 reading on the train/flight/bus
 reading to children at bedtime
 romantic fiction

S stimulating a child's imagination
 store thousands of books easily
 (*a*) successful genre
T to be glued to a book (*idiom*)
 to borrow books
 to buy books on the internet
 to find reading boring
 to not be able to put a book down
 to read between the lines (*idiom*)
 to read in bed
 to read only very occasionally
 to read voraciously
 to read widely
 travel books

C Climate change :: Signs

C cyclones
D drought
 dwindling water supplies
E El Niño events
 extreme weather events
F floods

G global warming
 (*the*) greenhouse effect
H hotter summers
I it is scientifically clear that
 human activity exacerbates the
 situation
L La Niña patterns

M (*the*) melting polar ice caps
 milder winters
R record temperatures
 (*a*) reduction in agriculturally
 productive land
 rising sea levels
 rising sea temperatures
S shorter winters

Climate change :: Causes**A** air pollution**C** climate skeptics**E** excessive carbon footprint in the developed nations**G** greed**I** (*the*) inability of politicians to act early to modify economic activity
increasing population
industrialisation
insufficient evidence**L** (*a*) lack of education about the fragility of the planet
(*a*) lack of international agreement on action**N** natural variation in weather patterns**O** over-farming of livestock**R** reliance on oil-based economy
(*the*) rich world over-consumes resources**Climate change :: Solutions****A** applying a carbon tax**C** carbon-offset schemes**E** educating children about sustainability**F** forging new and binding international agreements**G** growing low carbon crops**I** individual action to consume less
international action to alter lifestyles and reduce harmful economic activity**N** nuclear energy**P** policing the implementation of global agreements**S** (*a/the*) shift from animal to plant farming
solar energy
(*a*) switch to green energy**W** wave energy
wind farms**Communication :: Internet****A** applications**C** chat rooms
creating an online identity
(*a*) cyber bully**D** download speed**F** finding information**H** (*a*) helpful website**I** illegal downloading
inappropriate use of the internet**I** (*an*) informative website
internet addiction
(*the*) internet as a means of increasing democracy
internet crime
internet dating
(*an*) internet provider**M** monitoring children's use of the internet**N** news online**O** online bullying
online learning
online movies**P** (*a*) personal website**S** (*a*) suspicious website**T** (*the*) time spent on the internet is increasing**U** (*the*) use of the internet for social interaction**W** (*a*) web camera
(*the*) wider use of e-commerce

Communication :: Mobile phones**A** (*an*) annoying ring tone**C** (*a*) cell phone*(a)* cell phone plan**I** (*the*) illegal use of mobile phones while driving*(the)* inappropriate use of mobile phones in public places**M** monthly costs**S** switching off your mobile**T** to have your mobile phone stolen

to lose your mobile phone

T to replace your mobile to use your mobile phone constantly

to use your mobile phone for emergencies only

too young to have a mobile phone

Communication :: Computers**B** battery life**C** computer literacy
computer-based learning
(a) computer nerd**E** (*the*) easy availability of computers**F** (*a/the*) failure to develop interpersonal skills because of over-using the computer**G** gigabytes
(a) geek**H** hacking into confidential information/government sites
(the) hard drive**I** intellectual property
internet addiction**L** (*a*) laptop computer
low-price computers**M** megabytes
memory
(a) mouse
my computer crashed**N** (*a*) netbook**P** poor posture/back pain/tired eyes
processing speed**R** reliability**S** (*the*) short life of a computer
(a) software update
spending all your free time in front of a computer screen
(the) steadily reducing price of computers**T** technophobic
(a) touchpad
to be a social networker
to email constantly
to search the internet
to twitter**U** (*an*) upgrade
(the) use of computers in elementary school**Crime and Policing :: Crime****B** breaking and entering**D** drug trafficking**E** early release**F** (*a*) first offence
found guilty (or not guilty) by the jury**H** (*an*) habitual offender
held in custody**M** money laundering**O** on trial for...**P** (*a*) parking offence**R** released on parole**S** serving a prison sentence for...
(a) speeding offence**T** tax evasion
tax fraud
to be drunk and disorderly**T** to be under arrest
to blackmail (*someone*)
to carry an offensive weapon
to carry out a physical assault
to commit robbery with violenceto commit a crime
to murder (*someone*)
to undertake/carry out a robbery**U** under-age drinking

Crime and Policing :: Policing**C** (*the*) chief of police**D** death in custody
drug raid**E** (*an*) escaped offender**F** (*a*) full investigation**H** (*a*) high speed chase
hunt for a criminal**I** inspector of police**M** military police**P** plain-clothes police
(*a*) police car
police cells
(*a*) police constable
police corruption
(*a*) police dog
(*a*) police sergeant**S** special weapons assault team
(*the*) superintendent of police**T** to hold back a crowd
to accept a bribe
to arrest
to ask for legal representation
to be heavy-handed
to be under suspicion
to break up a disturbance
to breathalyse
to charge someone with an offence
to contact an informant
to cooperate with the police
to elicit a confession
to find a witness
to give a warning**T** to give chase
to handcuff
to have bail refused
to identify a suspect
to interview a suspect
to lie to the police
to make a false arrest
to patrol the streets
to question a suspect
to release on bail
to release without charge
to search someone
to spot someone on close circuit
television
to take into custody
to use a police baton
to use excessive force
to withhold evidence from...**U** uniformed police**E Education :: School years****B** being absent
broadly-based curriculum**C** class sizes
corporal punishment**D** dealing with behavioural
problems**E** empathetic teaching
exam nerves
exam-oriented curriculum**F** face-to-face teaching
fear of failure**L** learning social skills
limited attention span
(*the*) level of discipline in schools**I** (*the*) importance of creativity
inclusive classrooms (*means -
including disabled or slow learners in
the mainstream classroom*)**M** making school subjects
interesting and relevant
mixed schools**O** online learning**P** poor performance
preparing students for the
workplace**R** reading age
rising absenteeism**S** single sex schools
(*the*) social status of teachers is
declining in...**T** teaching life skills
teaching skills
test-driven
treating pupils more as adults**V** violence in schools

Education :: College or university

A aspects of university life
assignment-driven courses
(*the*) availability of lecturers for support

B (*the*) benefits and drawbacks of online course components
building independence
buying a university place

C (*the*) cost of studying in another city or country
(*the*) costs of a degree

D (*the*) decline in Arts subjects
(*the*) decline in social opportunities for networking

E education for life or education for work
elite universities
entry based on merit

F flexible study arrangements

H having to combine study with part-time work

I increased fees

L language support
(*the*) long-term debt caused by tuition fees'

M making friends

N (*a/the*) need for degrees that can be completed quickly

P practical degrees linked to occupations
(*the*) proportion of international students

R reduced government funding

S specialising too early

T taking more responsibility for your studies

U universities are lowering/raising their standards
universities are now more like businesses
university entrance exams
university league tables

Entertainment :: TV / radio

A adverts

C cartoons
channel-hopping
children's programs
(*a*) comedy show
(*a*) cooking program
(*a*) couch potato
current affairs programs

D documentaries on social issues
(*a*) drama series
dumbed-down program content

E endless adverts

G (*a*) game show host

I interrupted by the adverts

L late-night movies
local radio

M (*a*) movie made for tv

N (*a*) news announcer
(*a*) news broadcast

P pay channels
pay tv
(*a*) police series
poor reception
pop music stations
program content
programs on...

R (*a*) radio announcer
(*a*) radio shock jock
(*a*) radio station
(*a*) reality tv show
(*a*) repeat

S (*a*) serial
(*a*) series of documentaries
serious programs
(*a*) soap opera
superficial content

T talk shows
(*a*) talk show guest
(*a*) talk show host
(*the*) remote
to watch too much tv
(*a*) tv announcement
(*a*) tv celebrity
(*a*) tv channel
(*a*) tv meal
a tv show

U unsuitable for children
unsupervised viewing

W (*a*) weekly tv program
(*a*) wide-screen tv



Entertainment :: Film / movies

A (an) action movie
 (an) adventure movie
 (an) animation
 at the end of the movie....

C (a) cameo performance
 (a) comedy film
 (a) current release

F (a) film director
 (a) film festival

H (a) horror movie

I I couldn't take my eyes off the screen
 it was filmed in...
 it's being shown at the...
 it's on at 9pm

M movie stars

O (an) old movie
 (an) Oscar-winning performance
 (an) over-rated star

R (a) romantic comedy

S (a) science fiction film
 she gives a powerful performance as...
 special effects
 (a) spellbinding performance
 (a) supporting role
 (a) suspense film

T the action takes place in...
 The best part of the movie is when...
 The film drags...
 The film draws you in immediately
 The film is about...
 The main characters are played by...
 The movie lasts about 100 minutes
 This movie stars Brad Pitt
 to show a movie at...
 to star in...

U (an) under-rated actor

Environment and sustainability

B bleached coral

D develop sustainable farming methods

E encourage education about the environment
 endangered species
 environmentally-friendly
 environmentally-insensitive
 building development
 erosion

F food production methods
 future wars based on access to reliable supplies of food and water rather than territory

H hunting whales

I illegal ivory trade
 impact on the environment
 increased salinity
 increasing levels of toxicity
 international agreement on environmental protection

O oil pollution
 oil spills
 over-fishing

P polluted waters

R renewable energy

S sea warming
 species are losing their habitats
 stopping whale hunting

T to care enough about the environment
 to damage the environment
 to degrade the environment as a result of intensive farming
 to feed a growing world population
 to move to renewable energy sources
 to plan for a sustainable future
 to pollute the environment
 to protect and maintain water quality
 to protect the environment for future generations
 to reduce levels of waste
 to reduce our carbon footprint
 to tread lightly on the earth

H Happiness



C (*the*) constant creation of unnecessary consumer needs

H happiness depends on having basic needs met

happiness is a goal that many people aspire to

happiness is a state of mind

happiness is a temporary state

(*the*) happiness of giving

K keeping active rather than dwelling on things
keeping life simple

L leading a life that gives space for the important people in your life

(*a/the*) link between unhappiness and depression

N (*a/the*) need for a government ministry for the promotion of happiness

P permanent happiness
(*a*) positive outlook on life

P prevents happiness
(*the*) pursuit of happiness

S (*the*) secret of happiness
surveys suggest that people in affluent countries are often less happy than people who are living simple lives in developing countries

T thinking of others more than yourself
to find happiness unattainable
to have a happy nature/personality
to yearn for happiness
training yourself to think positive thoughts

Health :: Health problems



A allergies

B bacterial infections from hospitals
being overweight

C (*a*) cancer sufferer
chronic lifestyle diseases
constant costly improvements in medical technology

D depression
(*the*) diseases of aging
diabetes
drug dependency

E eradicating infectious diseases
expensive drug treatment

F faulty drug tests

G (*a*) global pandemic

H heart disease
higher life expectancy
higher proportion of elderly people

I inadequate sun protection
Inadequately-tested drug treatment
infectious diseases
influenza strains
insufficient government expenditure

L lack of exercise
low motivation

M malaria

N not eating healthily

O overwork

P poor diet
poor self image
poor work-life balance
poorly paid nurses
profit-driven, global pharmaceutical companies

R repetitive strain injury
resistant viruses
resurgence of tuberculosis

S sexually transmitted diseases
(*a/the*) shortage of doctors
skin sensitivity
sleeping disorders
spiralling costs
stress
(*a*) stressful job
symptoms of depression

T too many fatty foods
tuberculosis

U uncontrollable health costs

Health :: Health care**A** (*an*) annual medical check**B** being aware of risk factors
blood tests**C** (*a*) check up
compulsory vaccination
(*a*) cosmetic procedure
(*a*) cosmetic surgery**D** dental care
dental treatment**E** early detection
ensuring a healthy diet
(*an/the*) extraction**F** (*a*) filling**G** giving up smoking
greater knowledge of the genetic
basis of many diseases**H** health education
health insurance
holistic approaches
hospital treatment
hospital waiting lists**M** maintaining healthy gums
more information available about
health issues and disease
prevention**O** (*an*) organ transplant
outpatient treatment**P** prevention is better than cure
preventive care
promoting a healthy lifestyle**R** reducing the length of hospital
stay
regular monitoring of early
symptoms**S** signs or symptoms
(*al/the*) shortage of organ donors
(*a*) surgical operation**Health :: Sleep problems****B** (*the*) build up of sleep
deprivation
burning the candle at both ends
(*saying*)**C** (*a*) chronic lack of sleep
constant napping**D** disturbed sleep**E** (*the*) effects of stress on sleep**G** going to bed too late
(*a*) good night's sleep**H** health risks of inadequate sleep**I** (*the*) importance of melatonin to
sleep
(*an*) increased risk of stroke or
heart attack
insomnia
irregular working hours**R** rapid eye movement sleep**S** shift work
sleep apnoea
sleep deprivation
sleep medication
sleeplessness**T** to avoid caffeine in the evening
to be a poor sleeperto get to sleep
to go to bed worrying
to have difficulty falling asleep
to keep waking up
to read before going to sleep
to see a sleep therapist
to sleep fitfully
to sleep late/sleep in
to sleep on and off
to sleep soundly
to wake up feeling tired
U (*the*) use of meditation
(*the*) undoubted importance of sleep
to wellbeing



Holidays and travel

B (a) bumpy landing

C (a) crowded flight

F (the) flight attendants were very helpful/rude
(the) food in economy/business class was awful/surprisingly good/tasteless

I (the) in-flight entertainment broke down

O one of the local customs involves ...ing

S (a) smooth take off/landing
sniffer dogs

T to bargain with...
to be attacked by...
to be bitten by a mosquito
to be charged for...
to be constantly harangued by local traders/beggars
to be late for your flight
to be overcharged

T to be ripped off (*informal*)
to be stopped at customs
to be stung by a jelly fish
to book a holiday to...
to book tickets
to buy souvenirs
to change money
to check-in at the airport
to collect your baggage from the carousel
to complain to the hotel receptionist/manager about...
to experience some turbulence
to find the departure hall
to get sunburnt
to go on a bus tour to..
to go on an excursion to...
to go through the x-ray machine
to have a delay
to have a trouble-free flight
to have an up-to-date passport
to have something confiscated by customs
to have your baggage searched
to have your flight cancelled

T to lose your bags
to need a visa
to never want to go to... again
to pass through customs
to pay through the nose for... (*idiom*)
to put on sunscreen
to read through brochures
to relax by the hotel pool
to stay in a budget hotel/backpacker hostel/luxury hotel/room only/bed and breakfast/an ensuite room/with a beautiful view of.../over the bay/of the river
to sunbathe
to swim in the sea
to take a taxi to/from the airport/hotel
to take in the night life
to take some wonderful photos of...
to try out the local food
to wait for hours at the airport
to want to return to...
to watch the in-flight movies
(a) travel agency/agent

L Languages



- A** (*an*) archaic expression
- C** code switching
- D** (*the*) dominance of English
dynamic nature of language
- E** (*an*) educated language user
error correction
- F** first language acquisition
(*a*) formal language
- G** (*a/the*) global language
(*the*) grammar
- I** (*an*) idiolect
(*an*) inappropriate expression
incorrect grammar
it is our local dialect
- L** language as a functional tool of communication
language as a marker of identity
language as a means of creating
imaginative cultural masterpieces
language is becoming more informal

Leisure activities

- A** 'All work and no play...'
- C** camping
carrying out voluntary work
community work in...
- D** do-it-yourself activities like
renovating a kitchen or painting the house
- F** free time
- G** gardening
- H** healthy, outdoor activities
hiking
- I** (*the*) importance of having a hobby after retirement
the importance of leisure to a balanced lifestyle

- L** language is changing
(*a*) language is dynamic
(*the*) language is now only spoken by...
(*the*) language learnt in colonial times
(*a*) language that is dying out
learning language in context
loan words
- M** maintaining your first language
- O** (*the*) official language
- P** (*the*) pronunciation of...
- R** (*the*) range of meaning
(*a*) regional accent
resistance to Anglicised expressions
- S** (*a*) society where the language is spoken
speaking with a terrible accent
subtle meanings of language



- L** leisure time
leisure-time activities
- M** mountaineering
- R** rock climbing
- S** sky diving
- T** theme parks
to be a couch potato (*idiom*)
to be interested in personal growth activities like meditation
to do nothing
to do something creative
to eat out at good restaurants
to enjoy the opera
to go for a picnic

- T** to be completely fluent in...
to encourage people to speak
to find it easy to learn
to forget a language
to go to language classes
to immerse yourself in the culture
to improve rapidly
to know some slang expressions
to know the basics of a language
to learn a completely different language from your own
to learn a new language
to learn vocabulary
to lose a language
to make slow progress
to not be able to understand language spoken at normal speed
to practise every day
to speak like a native speaker
to speak several languages
translation methods
- U** (*a*) universal language
- W** (*the*) written form of the language

- T** to go jogging regularly
to go to the theatre
to go to concerts
to go to the beach
to go to the fitness centre
to grow your own food
to have a hobby
to learn new things
to live a life of leisure
to need more leisure time
to relax in front of the television
to try something new
to use leisure time wisely
to volunteer to...
to walk in the park
too much leisure in retirement
trekking
- W** walking



N Nutrition :: Diet

A anorexia
B (a) balanced diet
 balanced nutrition
C caffeine intake
D dietary supplements
E excessive sugar intake
H (a) high-protein diet
I I couldn't maintain my diet
 insufficient dietary fibre

L (a) low, carbohydrate diet
M (a) Mediterranean diet
 mild obesity
 my diet didn't work
O (an) obsession with losing weight
S (a) special, low-fat diet
 stress-fuelled overeating
T to change your diet
 to eat a healthy diet

T to eat less processed food
 to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables
 to gain weight
 to go on a diet
 to lose weight
 to maintain liquid intake
 to need more protein
 to overeat
 to restrict your intake of...
 to watch your diet
V (a) vegetarian diet

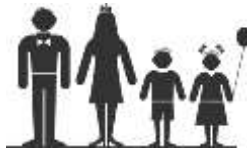
Nutrition :: Food / drink

A adjusting your food intake
 alcoholic drinks
 allowing food to digest properly
 anxiety about eating
B bland tasting food
 bottled water
C carbonated drinks
 cheese
 chemically-treated food
D dairy products
 decaffeinated coffee
E eating good food
 eating on the run
 eating slowly
 energy drinks
 expensive food
F fast food
 food additives
 food advertising
 food markets
 food packaging
 food shortages
 foods that are damaging to your health
 foods that are good for you
 fresh fruit juice
 fruit

G genetically modified food
 government policy towards labelling
 growing control of the supermarket chains
 growing your own food
H health benefits of moderate wine-drinking
 (a) herb garden
 home-cooked food
I imported food
 inadequate food labelling
 instant meals
 international foods
L locally-grown food
M milk
O olive oil
 organically-grown foods
 overcooked
P (the) popularity of food programs on tv
 processed food
 pulses

R raw food
 rice
 rising grocery bills
S salad
 shopping for food daily
 (the) slow food movement
 snack foods
 spicy food
 staple crops
 supermarket brands
 sushi
T targeting children
 tasteless
 tasty food
 to stop snacking between meals
U undercooked
V vegetable garden
 vegetables
W (the) weekly trip to the supermarket
Y yoghurt

P Parents and children



A (*an*) abused child
(*an*) average child

B badly-behaved children
bringing up children in today's world is very challenging

C (*a*) child born on the wrong side of the tracks
(*a*) child from a wealthy family
(*a*) child who is out of control
children these days have less respect for their elders
children who have everything

D (*a*) demanding child
depending on parents for everything
disciplinarians
disobedient children

F feeling close to your parents

G (*the*) generation gap
(*a*) gifted child

H helping out at home

I in my grandparents' time
inter-generational conflict

L lack of respect for parents
leaving home too early

M my parents are always there for me
my parents are very traditional

N (*a*) nagging child
(*a*) needy child
(*a*) neglected child

O open-minded
over-protective parents

P parental expectations
parental guidance
parenting skills
parents need to teach children
more self discipline
parents who split up when the children are young
permissive parents
(*a*) poor family
progressive parents

R refusing to take responsibility for their own life
respecting your parents

S (*a*) single-parent family
(*a*) spoiled child
(*a*) stubborn child

T to be more influenced by your mother than your father
to be responsible for the upbringing of your children
to drift apart from your parents
to follow your parents' advice
to have parents who are very liberal
to have your grandparents living with you
to hold traditional values
to let your grandparents go into an aged care facility or home
to miss your parents
to need your own space
to not talk openly to your parents
to obey your parents
to tell your parents everything

Population



A (*an*) aging population

D (*a*) dwindling population

E economic migration
emigration

G (*a*) growing population

I illegal entry
immigration
insufficient infrastructure to support the level of population

L (*a*) lower birth rate

M migration

N net migration

O overcrowding
overpopulation

P permanent residency
population growth
population issues

R refugees
(*a*) reluctance to have a large family

(*the*) rising costs of child-rearing

S state encouragement to have children
(*a*) sustainable population

T to adapt
to apply for citizenship
to assimilate into a new society
to be granted citizenship
to be issued with a visa
to seek a better life
to be worried about the kind of future that your children will inherit



Public transport

A assaults on trains or buses
 automated ticket systems
C (*the*) cost of travelling by bus or train needs to be attractive, especially to those who are less well-off
 crowded buses/trains/trams
F fare discounts between peak hours
 (*the*) future possibility of electric buses
I investment in public transport is essential for future needs

I (*an*) important part of urban infrastructure
M (*a/the*) metro system enables mass public transit in large cities
 multi-trip tickets
N (*a/the*) need for regular services, especially outside rush hours
 (*a/the*) need to limit the use of private cars in cities
P public transport is less environmentally damaging than private cars are

S safety on public transport schemes to make public transport more attractive
T to reduce congestion by taking public transport to run intermittently/occasionally/irregularly
 to run on time
 to take a bus/train/tram to work
U user-friendly timetables
W well-lit bus stops

R Relationships



A (*an*) abusive relationship
B (*a*) baby sitter
 (*a*) blended family
 boyfriend-girlfriend
 (*a*) broken family
 (*a*) brother
C (*a*) caesarean section
E (*the*) eldest child
 emotional abuse
 (*an*) estranged husband
 expensive child care
 (*an*) extended family
F (*a/the*) first child
I identical twins
 induced labour
H (*a*) house husband
L life goes on
M (*a/the*) middle child
N natural birth
 (*a*) nuclear family
P parenting skills
 (*a*) partner
 pregnancy
S shared parenting
 siblings
 (*a/the*) sister
 step children
T to be a feminist
 to be a good listener

T to be against institutional care
 to be bedridden
 to be betrayed by
 to be blind to someone's faults
 to be close to your parents
 to be co-dependent
 to be critical of...
 to be grateful for...
 to be infatuated with
 to be jealous
 to be let down by (*someone*)
 to be over-possessive
 to be refused access to your children
 to be taken in by (*someone*)
 to be the prime carer
 to be too macho
 to be totally dependent on (*someone*)
 to discuss your feelings
 to drift apart
 to fall in love
 to fall out of love
 to fall out with (*someone*)
 to feel a duty towards...
 to feel helpless
 to feel responsible for...
 to find someone else
 to find the right one
 to find your soul mate
 to get married
 to get over (*someone*)
 to give the other person enough space
 to have a de facto relationship
 to have different interests

T to hold in your feelings
 to keep in regular contact with
 to learn from your mistakes
 to live for (*someone*)
 to look after your aging parents
 to lose contact with (*someone*)
 to lose mobility
 to lose someone
 to miss someone
 to move on with your life
 to need constant care
 to never get over the loss of...
 to never see someone again
 to no longer see eye to eye on
 to offer love and support
 to pay maintenance
 to practice some 'give and take'
 to raise your child as a single parent
 to respect each other
 to separate from
 to settle down
 to share the household tasks
 to share the same interests
 to spend quality time with your children
 to still be independent
 to treat a woman with respect
 to trust your partner
 (*a*) toxic relationship
 twins
W (*a*) wife



S Sport

A (an) amateur player

B (a) brand name racquet
brand name sports clothing

C (a) champion
(the) commercialisation of sport

E (an) elite athlete
extreme sports

F fitness
football hooliganism

G (a) global audience
global coverage

I income from product endorsement

M (a) match report
(a) medal winner

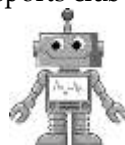
O (the) Olympics

P paid too much
(a) professional sportsman

R running shoes

S spectators
sport has become too much of a business
sport is too commercialized
(a) sports commentator
(a) sports magazine
(a) sports personality
(a) sports report
supporters

T tennis is beginning to take off
(idiom) in...
to be a dedicated sportsman
to be a fan of...
to be a loyal fan
to be interested in sport
to be a sportsman
to be very good at sports
to dedicate themselves to their sport
to go to every match
to join a sports club
to lose



T to make sacrifices in order to get to the top of your sport
to not be sporty
to play for fun only
to play sport for exercise
to play sport regularly
to practise constantly in order to improve
to represent your country
to retire from sport
to take up a sport
to watch live sport
to watch sport on television
to win easily
(a) top athlete
(a) top competitor
(a) top player
top sports stars are overpaid
top sports stars should be good role models for...

W (a/the) world record

Y young people are less willing to train hard

T Technology

A advanced technology
automated manufacturing processes

B bioengineering

C (a) college of technology

D design costs
developing new manufacturing techniques

E (an) electric car
electronics
(the) environmental impact of technology

F futuristic technology

G gene technology
genetically modified food

H hi-tech. industries

I intelligent robots
intermediate technology

K keyhole surgery

L (a/the) lack of technology
laser technology

M medical technology
microchip technology
miniaturisation

N nanotechnology
nuclear technology

O outdated
outmoded technology

P patenting
production costs

R research and development
robotics

S satellite technology
(a/the) shortage of modern technology
solar technology
space technology
'state of the art' technology

T technological innovation
technological progress
thermal energy
3D (three dimensional) printers

W wave motion technology

The future



A (*an*) apocalyptic
vision of environmental destruction

B battles over resources
(*a*) bleak future

C cloning
(*the*) colonisation of outer space

E electronic surveillance
endless corruption

F (*a*) future characterised by
unimaginable inventions
(*the*) future holds many surprises
(*a*) future in which peace reigns
supreme

F (*the*) future looks bleak
(*a*) future marked by electronic
control

(*a*) future of bitter struggles
between the 'haves' and the
'have-nots'

G genetic engineering

I (*the*) inability of the human
race to manage the planet

M medical progress

N (*the*) need to secure a safe
world for future generations

O (*the*) option to live for ever could be
achieved

organ replacement will become
commonplace

R (*a*) rosy future

T to anticipate the future
to be optimistic about the future
to predict the future
to see into the future

U (*an*) uncertain future

W (*a*) war-torn future
we need a sustainable future
world government

W Work :: Workplace



A annual bonuses
annual leave

B boring work

C challenging work

E exciting work

F fringe benefits

I I didn't get the job

M (*a*) manufacturing company
(*a*) multinational company

P (*a*) part-time position

R rather routine

S (*a*) salary package
(*a*) software company
(*a*) starting salary
stimulating

T to apply for a better job
to apply for a job

T to be a casual worker
to be fired
to be flexible
to be offered an interview
to be offered the job
to be posted overseas
to be promoted
to be put on short-time
to be successful
to be underpaid for the
responsibility you have
to develop your career and
become a...
to fill in an application form
to find work
to find your boss difficult... (*to
get on with*)
to get on well with work
colleagues
to go for an interview
to hand in your notice
to have a good boss
to have enough to live on in
retirement

T to hope to become a...
to lose your job
to make a great deal of money
to multi-task
to quit
to respect your boss
to retrain as a...
to start your own business
to struggle in retirement
to struggle on your earnings
to travel overseas as part of your job
to work for a local business which
makes...
to work for an international company
to work full-time
to work in a democratic company
to work in a hierarchical company
to work past retirement age

W working conditions

Work :: Work-life balance**C**aring for elderly parents**S**tress often prevents the effective completion of tasks**T**o be burnt out

to be under too much pressure

to build up a pension

to change to part-time work

to do something more with your life

to feel too much pressure

To feel unappreciated as a worker

to find work stressful

to grow as a person

to have insufficient time for your family

to have more time to do the things you enjoy

to have more time to spend with friends

to learn new skills

to lose motivation

To lose too much sleep because of work

to make more of your life

to need a better quality of life

to need a complete change

to need more holidays

to need more quality time with your family

to plan for retirement

to retire early

to work long hours

to work too hard

Y You can do it!

Congratulations on looking through just some of this vocabulary – you have done really well! We are now at the end of our resource sections.

I can't sit with you when you take the IELTS test but, one way or another, I'll be there cheering you on! Good luck!





IELTS SPEAKING

WHAT'S INSIDE:

❖ Speaking Lesson

- First questions answered
- What if I...? Some problem situations
- 13 secrets of how to achieve a higher score in the IELTS Interview

❖ Speaking Fitness Activities

- Activities 1-16 (for Part 1 of the Speaking Test)
- Activities 1-7 (for Part 2 of the Speaking Test)
- Activities 1-5 (for Part 3 of the Speaking Test)

❖ Speaking Resources

- Interview, rated sample
- Top score vocabulary
- Questions for practice

SPEAKING LESSON

First Questions Answered

Q. What does the IELTS interview consist of, and how long does it last?

A. The interview has these main elements:

- You are interviewed by one, trained IELTS assessor.
- The interview is in three parts, lasting a total of 11-14 minutes.
- The assessor asks all the questions.
- The assessor awards your score.

Q. What is in each of the three parts?

A. The parts are divided up as follows:

- In **Part 1** the assessor asks you questions on three everyday topics for a total of four to five minutes. There are usually four questions for each topic.
- In **Part 2** you give a short talk on a topic which is given to you beforehand. The topic is on a task card, such as the one below:

Talk about someone you know, or know about, who has had an interesting life.

You should say:

who the person is

where the person comes from

what is interesting about that person's life

and explain why that person's life seems interesting to you.

You have one minute to plan your talk and have to talk for one to two minutes.

- In **Part 3** you are asked questions of a more general nature, but broadly related to the topic of your talk. The assessor may respond to your answers to draw out more detail.

Q. How can I be sure I perform well in each part?

A. Practise before the test and follow a systematic routine, like this one:

What you should do:	How?	Why?
Part 1 – answer each question sufficiently.	By understanding each question and responding clearly, fluently and naturally for about 15 seconds or so while varying grammar and vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To keep the rhythm of the test's timing (max. 12 questions in four to five minutes). To give a positive initial impression of level.
Part 2 – plan your talk systematically during the one minute preparation time.	By writing a quick outline of your answer to each of four parts on the task card.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimize chances of a repetitive, confused talk. To ensure that you talk for long enough, with confidence.
Part 3 – develop your answer to each question in a more formal and extended way using your own knowledge and experience.	By adding detailed explanations or examples using formal phrases like, 'By this I mean...' or 'Let me try to explain it in another way' or 'I'll give you an example from my own society'. Aim to extend each response for about 30 or 40 seconds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To sound more mature and more considered. You can become the 'expert' when talking about your own society as an example.

Q. What do I have to do to respond well to the assessor?

A. Your task is to:

- Speak as clearly and as fluently as you can while answering the questions coherently, with good grammar, flexible and appropriate vocabulary and clear pronunciation and intonation.
- Relate to the assessor as naturally, confidently and with as much interest as you can.
- Keep to the timing and rhythm of the test's parts to make the assessor's job easier.
- Represent yourself authentically, meaning don't memorise answers or sound mechanical. Give real information from your life in a genuine way.

Q. Do my answers have to be truthful and based on my own life experiences?

A. This is a question for your own conscience! The assessor is not assessing truth value, but most people feel more comfortable when they are representing themselves honestly. If you get a question or topic but it is outside your experience try to talk about something that really happened to a friend or to a relative. For example, imagine a Part 2 topic asking you to describe something you made at school, you can say,

'I'm afraid I never made anything at school but I remember that a friend of mine made a wonderful basket, so I'd like to talk about that'.

The assessor will not penalize you, because you are adapting as well as you can to the situation and it is still connected to your own life. It is your language that is being assessed, not your life.

Q. OK, but should I try to say something nice to the assessor? Is it OK to chat?

A. If the assessor is a more formal type of person, then they might see compliments as your attempt to get a higher score, rather than as sincere. If you chat too much and try to involve the assessor, this may seem over-friendly for a first meeting. The best option is to find a 'middle way'.

Be friendly and pleasant but take the test situation seriously as well. Adapt to the different phases of the test:

- In Part 1 the topics are general so you can use a less formal style.
- In Part 3 you are discussing issues and developing your opinions, so be a little more formal then.

Assessors differ in terms of their personalities, ages, expectations, but they all have a serious job to do and are trying to do it in the fairest way they can. Help them. This will have the most positive impact on them.

Q. Are there 'wrong things' I might say, that will affect my score?

A. The assessor is evaluating your use of language, not your opinions. If you say something, in Part 3, for example, that the assessor strongly disagrees with, they may try to encourage you to explain in more detail why you have that opinion. But it is probably a good strategy not to express views that are too strong or too controversial in case the assessor is affected unconsciously in a negative way.

Q. How should I dress for the interview?

A. The test takes place in many countries so there are different cultural considerations. In general terms it is better to dress smartly and tidily but not too formally (this may be seen as trying to influence your score). Clothes are, of course, not assessed directly but may have an effect unconsciously on the assessor's impression of how serious you are about the test and how much respect you have for them and for the situation. At the same time you need to feel comfortable in your clothes so that you feel confident and at ease.

Q. When does the assessor give me my score?

A. The assessor is thinking about your individual scores for each of four criteria during the test. These **four criteria** are:

Assessment criteria	Some features affecting your score
Fluency and Coherence	How much do you hesitate? How appropriate and developed are your answers? How do you link ideas?
Lexical Resource	How flexible are you in your choice of words? What range of vocabulary do you have access to?
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	How accurate are you grammatically? What range of sentence types can you use?
Pronunciation	How easy are you to understand? How well can you put feeling into your voice through intonation? How well can you use chunking* and pauses?

* See Secret #5 in the 'Secrets of how to achieve a higher score...' section, Page 271.

At the end of the interview the assessor gives you a score from 0-9 on each of these four dimensions and then your overall score is calculated by IELTS.

Q. What is the best way to get from an IELTS 6 to a 7 score for Speaking?

A. This is a frequently asked question as many candidates need the higher score. We consider these to be important ways to lift your score from 6 to 7:

- Make your spoken English as natural as you can (as much like a native speaker as you can) and add variety (life) to your intonation.
- Add as much variety and flexibility as possible to your grammar and vocabulary.
- Show fluency and confidence.
- Relate well to, and cooperate well with, the assessor.
- Avoid repetition and reduce simple errors (e.g. wrong tense, wrong subject/verb agreements, lack of plural forms).
- Answer questions relevantly in Part 1, give a relevant, well-organised talk in Part 2, and extend your answers intelligently in Part 3.

To find step by step guidance take a careful look at our advice in 'Secrets of how to achieve a higher score...' later in this chapter. Then, try out the Fitness Activities on page 278.

**GOLD STAR ADVICE No. 1:**

An interview gives you an opportunity to help to establish a comfortable social relationship. Try to see yourself as the assessor's 'partner' in the interview situation, not the victim of a test interrogation.

What if I...? Some Problem Situations

Q. What if I don't understand a question in Part 1?

A. Use a polite, formal or even idiomatic request to ask for the question to be repeated, for example:

'I didn't quite catch that. Could you repeat it, please?'

'I'm sorry but would you mind repeating that, please?'

If you heard the question but didn't understand it at all, just say:

'I'm sorry, would you mind moving on to the next question, please?'



Note: The assessor can only repeat questions in Part 1, not explain them.

Q. What if my assessor seems distracted and not interested in the conversation, or stops me before I have a chance to finish. What can I do in this situation?

A. Candidates occasionally report such problems and it is clearly a problem. Your best strategy is to be as lively as you can and to use your voice to maintain interest. Good intonation keeps the attention of the listener usually. If the assessor cuts you off, it probably means that they are worried about the time (i.e. you are taking up too much time for each answer in Part 1) Try to practise giving answers of about 15-20 seconds on average for most of the questions in Part 1.

Q. What if I don't want to talk about the Part 2 topic or don't know much about it?

A. It's probably better to try to talk about the topic you are given, or something close to that topic, than to ask for a different topic, because this causes less disruption to the test timing.

Q. What if I don't understand a question in Part 3?

A. In Part 3 you can use excellent English to ask for clarification if you don't understand the question. For example, you can say:

'Could you phrase that question in a different way, I didn't quite follow it?'

'Do you mean _____ or _____?'

'If I understood you correctly, you are asking _____. Is that right?'

Q. What if my mind goes blank because I'm nervous?

A. If your mind goes blank, buy time with some 'filler' expressions, for example:

*'I'm sorry but the word has gone out of my mind completely', or
'I'm afraid I've totally forgotten what I wanted to say'*

then try your answer again or start your answer in another way, saying,

'Let me see if I can explain it/answer the question in a different way'

Use an active, positive strategy, don't just freeze or panic!

Q. What if I don't make notes for the Part 2 talk? Or, in the opposite situation, how do I know when to stop making notes?

A. You don't have to make notes but you do need to offer a coherent talk which seems organized, so the task card and your notes are supposed to help. The assessor will tell you when to stop making notes.

Q. What if I can't talk for two minutes in Part 2?

A. You only have to talk for a minimum of one minute. If you stop before the two minutes is up, the assessor will check by asking something like, *'Could you say anything else about that?'* If you have spoken for at least a minute it is OK to answer *'That's all'*. Or, you can continue, like this:

Example

Assessor: Could you say anything else about that?

You: *Mm, what else can I say?...Well...* (and continue)

Q. What if I take a moment to think while answering and there is a bit of silence, will it ruin my score?

A. If you are only thinking before answering, no it won't. If you hesitate too often in the middle of sentences because of struggling for words or accuracy, then this might affect your score negatively.

Q. What if I freeze when speaking to this stranger (the assessor), how can I fight that?

A. Different cultures have different attitudes to strangers and the IELTS interview is a sensitive situation for any candidate. You need to keep telling yourself that the assessor is just a person who is interested in you (This is probably true anyway!) and so your job is to seem interesting rather than shy. You are a representative of your country, so talk with pride, don't hide in fear. Try to find native speakers of English to practise with before the exam.

Q. What if I talk for too long, especially in Parts 1 or 2?

A. The assessor will usually signal with a hand if they want you to stop at the end of each section. Just say something like, *'Oh, sorry'* and wait.

Secrets of How to Achieve a Higher Score in the IELTS Interview

Your assessor is a busy person with perhaps 15 candidates to interview. Maybe you are the last candidate of the day so the assessor might be a little tired. Within the limitations of your English, you need to create a positive relationship with the assessor through the quality of your spoken language and social contact.



GOLD STAR ADVICE No 2: Connecting always counts.

As well as everything you say and how well you say it, the quality of the connection you make with the assessor comes to represent 'YOU' in the mind of the assessor. Be interesting; make good contact.

Q. How can I attract a higher score from the IELTS assessor?

A. There are certain things that always create a good impression.

Follow these detailed suggestions and your Interview will be appreciated by your assessor:

1. Take care when building your answers

Explanation

The assessor has to judge whether or not you have answered the question coherently. This means whether your ideas are linked together in an 'easy to follow' way.

Why is this important?

Linking ideas clearly creates a good impression of you as a good communicator because you try to help the listener as much as you can.

Example



I like pets. Pets are friends. Many people have pets. People are less lonely.



*I like pets **because** pets are friends. People have pets **so that** they are less lonely.*

2. Extend your responses – say it, explain it, support it.

Explanation

If you use a structured and organized approach when starting a response, especially in Part 3, this will help you to extend your response and make it more coherent. It will also give you more opportunities to display a wider range of sentence types and vocabulary.

Example

Assessor:		Do you think weddings are a good idea these days?
You:	Say it	<i>Well not really, in fact I suppose I'm a bit anti-weddings.</i>
	Explain it	<i>By saying this I suppose I mean that at many weddings today there seems, to my mind at least, to be too much emphasis on display and perhaps not enough attention given to deep meaning.</i>
	Support it	<i>For example, I've seen many of my friends' marriages fail and this has made me a little pessimistic about expensive, 'showy' wedding ceremonies that seem mainly about displays of wealth. It's the deep commitment of two people that is the core of a marriage.</i>

3. Try to use your own personal experience when appropriate

Explanation

Your own experiences are often easier for you to talk about.

Why is this important?

Your own life and culture can be used to generate examples and this helps to extend an answer, especially in Part 3.

Example



I think friends are easier to talk to than relatives.



Friends are much easier to talk to than relatives. In my country, generally speaking, people talk more openly to their friends than to their relatives because our culture is... I'll give you an example from my own situation...

4. Try not to drift off topic

Explanation

It's important to make your answers respond to the questions relevantly and coherently.

Why is this important?

'Relevance' here means that your reply fits the usual expectations of an answer to that question and responds to the central intention of the question. If your answer is relevant it tells the assessor you understood the question appropriately and listened to it fully.

Example

Assessor:

What do you imagine will happen to marriage in the future?

You (Response 1):



I'm not sure if I'll get married in the future. I want to get a good job and build my career so that I don't have to worry too much about money. Maybe I'll think about getting married after that.

You (Response 2):



I think marriage will become less popular, at least in this society, because many young people are becoming more self-centred. They seem to think less about families and more about their own needs. Perhaps in the future this will make them less willing to make a major commitment like marriage, less willing to take responsibility.

Response 1 is not really relevant to the question, which is asking about marriage in general, not the candidate's marriage. Response 2 is more relevant.

5. Improve your pronunciation

Explanation

The better your pronunciation is, the easier you are to understand. If your pronunciation is weak, it may not be easy to perfect it immediately, but you can make some helpful adjustments.

Example

Part 1 topic about cooking:

Assessor: How often do you cook your own meals?

First of all, the assessor won't want to hear an unbroken answer in a flat, monotone voice, as in:

You: *'Idon'tcookveryoftenperhapstwiceaweekbecauseIsometimesworklate andthenIjustbuyfastfoodonthewayhome'*

So, here are some important ways of improving your pronunciation:

Try skilful 'chunking'

'Chunking' involves speaking in blocks of words and then taking a tiny pause. It helps to build a slightly slower rhythm consisting of clear blocks of meaning. This helps the listener. But, you mustn't make the pauses too long or too mechanical, or fluency is lost and it sounds unnatural and even hesitant. So the original response might be improved like this:

You: *I don't cook very often [mini-pause] perhaps twice a week [mini-pause] because I sometimes work late [mini-pause] and then I just buy fast food [mini-pause] on the way home.*

Apply good stress and rhythm

You also need to remember to stress the main information-carrying parts of your responses. So, as well as chunking and 'quick-pausing', you would stress the following elements (in bold type) more heavily than others, to communicate key information clearly, while maintaining appropriate rhythm by saying the parts between in an even-timed way:

You: *I **don't COO**k very **often** [mini-pause] perhaps **TWICE** a **WEE**k [mini-pause] because I sometimes **WORK** late [mini-pause] and then I just buy **FASt** **FOOd** [mini-pause] on the way **HO**me.*

You also need to be careful to pinpoint correct stress inside words (e.g. souven**IR**, not sou**V**enir; **MAN**ager not man**A**ger; **IN**ternet, not in**TER**net).

Remember there are classes of words that are normally stressed (nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives) but also those that **aren't** normally stressed (prepositions, articles, linking expressions, pronouns) unless a particular contrast is being made (e.g. **I** love her, but **YOU** don't).

Practice intonation to inject life into your voice

Finally, to introduce a little more intonation ('voice music') into your responses you could add a comment which shows your attitude or feeling, by using strong stress PLUS a higher tone and slower pronunciation, so that your response finally becomes::

You: *I **don't** **COO**k very **of**ten [mini-pause] perhaps **TW**ice a **WEE**k [mini-pause] because I sometimes **WOR**k **late** [mini-pause] and then I just buy **FA**st **FOO**d [mini-pause] on the **way** **HO**me. [pause] I bet it's [higher tone] **R E A L**ly **B A**d for me!*

6. Use variety of vocabulary

Explanation

If you keep repeating the same simple words, the assessor realizes that you don't have much flexibility and are unable to vary your vocabulary, or express precise meaning.

Why is this important?

Variety makes you sound more interesting and more flexible as an English speaker.

Example



My dog is nice. He's a very nice pet. He likes nice walks. It's nice to walk with him every day. Every day I go with him for a walk.



My dog has a very friendly nature and is a very loving pet. He really enjoys his walk every day, and I get a great deal of pleasure from these daily outings as well.

7. Use up-to-date idioms or colloquial vocabulary occasionally

Explanation

Hearing occasional, everyday idioms, phrasal verbs or colloquial expression makes the assessor feel that you are similar to them in your cultural style. This is persuasive.

Example 1



Too basic

Q: Tell me about your favourite food.

A: *I like curry.*

Q: Why?

A: *Because it's spicy... and it's very hot... I enjoy going to different Indian restaurants...*



More varied & interesting

Q: Tell me about your favourite food.

A: *I'm really **crazy about** curries.*

Q: Why?

A: *Well, they're so spicy...sometimes they're so hot they can almost **take your head off**... but I really enjoy **trying out** different Indian restaurants...*

Example 2



Q: Do you like studying in Australia?

A: *I feel a bit like a **fish out of water**, so it's **not really my cup of tea**.*



Q: Do you still play tennis regularly?

A: *No I've had to **call it a day** because I've got my final exams soon.*

The first example would be considered an 'unnatural' response because using two idioms, one immediately after another, seems a bit forced.

8. Reduce simple grammar mistakes

Explanation

Constantly making simple grammar mistakes doesn't always affect communication or understanding but creates a negative impression. It tends to suggest that you haven't worked hard to conquer those mistakes from your early years of learning English.

Why is this important?

To get a higher score you need to sound as much like a native speaker as possible. Native speakers rarely make basic grammatical errors.

Example



With grammar mistakes

Q: Which other language would you like to learn?

A: **I like** learn French

Q: Why?

A: It **is interested** language. My **father speak** French. He **learn** it when **he's** a child I like to **talk him** in French.



Without grammar mistakes

Q: Which other language would you like to learn?

A: *I'd really like to learn French*

Q: Why?

A: *It is such an interesting language. Actually, my father speaks French. He learnt it when he was a child. I'd really like to be able to talk with him in French.*

9. Respond to any comments made by your assessor

Explanation

Sometimes your assessor will comment on your answer (as opposed to asking you the next question). Here is an example of how to respond in a natural way:

Example

Assessor: It sounds as though you don't really trust the idea of marriage.

You: ***Does it? Maybe you're right.** I think it's definitely true that marriage seems more risky these days, as in this type of society people are more selfish, more independent and less respectful of tradition and so they may not feel so deeply connected to any promises they make.*

10. Cooperate with the assessor's time restrictions

Explanation

The assessor has to cover the three parts of the interview according to a strict time schedule so you need to help the assessor with this, not cause stress.

Why is this important?

If you talk for too long when answering, for example, Part 1 topic questions, the assessor has difficulty asking all the 12 questions. Conversely, if your answers are too short, the assessor doesn't use the minimum time for Part 1 (four minutes).

Example

After the Part 2 talk, the assessor asks a quick question. Give a shortish answer so that the assessor has enough time for Part 3. Try to give longer answers in Part 3.

Talk topic: 'Your best friend'. The assessor is asking a quick rounding-off question:

Assessor:

Do you see your best friend very often?

You (Response 1):



Yes I do, very often.

You (Response 2):



Yes, of course. I see him every day when I'm in my country. I phone him up as soon as I get back and we meet, in a café maybe, and talk about all the things that we want to do together, you know, like going to the cinema or having a meal at our favourite restaurants, like the one in the city centre where we always went when we were at school together. The food there is great and pretty cheap still.

You (Response 3):



Yes, of course. When I go back home we meet up and plan what to do together. We see each other most days, and send text messages to each other all the time.

Response 1 is too short, Response 2 is too long, and Response 3 is about the right length.

11. Treat the assessor as your equal, not as your boss

Explanation


The interview is a social experience between two strangers, where one (the assessor) has the questions and controls time, but doesn't control your answers or your personality.


Why is this important?

Although confidence is not being assessed directly, in western cultural terms it makes you seem weak and limited if your answers show a lack of positive energy and low self-confidence – this suggests you are allowing yourself to be dominated by the situation.

Example

Assessor: Are you good at cooking?

You (Response 1):  *No, I'm not good at cooking, I'm very bad at cooking.*

You (Response 2):  *Well, I'm not the best cook in the world, but I can cook simple things, and I enjoy eating what I cook, even if others don't.*

Response 1 sounds negative, too self critical, whereas Response 2 sounds more positive, but realistic; not over-confident.

12. Try to make appropriate eye contact

Explanation

In western cultures eye contact is an accepted part of a conversation even with someone who has authority over you.

Why is this important?

In the IELTS interview you are not just using English you are creating a brief social relationship with your assessor. The assessor needs to feel comfortable too. If you make appropriate eye contact, it gives the impression that you are interested and so the interview feels more comfortable for the assessor as they can more easily make contact with you. Actually it is hard for the assessor to make regular eye contact as they have to read the words on the page in front of them accurately. Try not to be put off by this.

Example

You could make gentle, positive eye contact when:

- listening to questions or instructions
- when giving your answers

13. Don't ask about your performance at the end of the interview

Explanation

When the assessor announces that the interview has ended, don't ask any questions about your performance—this may annoy the assessor, who is not permitted to comment on your performance. Just say something polite and leave.

Example

Assessor:

That's the end of the interview.

You (Response 1):



Great. How did I do? Was I OK? I was pretty nervous - hope that didn't show.

You (Response 2):



OK. Thank you. It was really nice talking to you. Is it all right to leave now?



SPEAKING FITNESS ACTIVITIES

The fitness activities in this section will help you to tell some of the differences between a stronger response and a weaker response, and to improve your own responses when you try the IELTS Practice Interview.

Since you are probably reading this e-book on a computer or mobile device, it would be best to get some paper to write your answers on.

PART 1 » Answering Questions on Three Everyday Topics

Fitness Activities 1–16 for Part 1 of the IELTS Speaking Test



Activities 1–5 will help you to build stronger responses to questions on Topic 1:

Topic 1	Let's talk about your home
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1 Question: 'Do you live in an apartment or a house?'

Which of these possible responses seems the most appropriate, and why?

- a) 'A house.'
- b) 'I live in a house in West Beach; I've lived there for about 2 years now.'
- c) 'I live in a house. The house is big.'

2 Question: 'Is it a good place to live? (Why?/Why not?)'

Which response is not really answering what the question is asking?

- a) 'Yes, it's the suburb that is near the city centre, with all the best shops.'
- b) 'Not really, as it's located in a very noisy part of town and the landlord never does anything about our complaints.'
- c) 'Yes it's a really good place because the rent is reasonable and it's near to the train station.'

3 Question: 'Is the area where you live pleasant? (Why?/Why not?)'

Which response is a good one? What seems wrong with each of the other two?

- a) 'It's pleasant, yes. It's pleasant because it has very pleasant parks nearby. These parks are nice and big, with nice flowers, and nice trees.'
- b) 'Yes, it's great. There are plenty of parks, with tennis courts, and many varied, native plants, flowers and trees. Also the houses are all well-built and up-to-date.'
- c) 'Yes it has...er...it has pleasant surroundings...er...and very attractive parks, with sports...erm...facilities...and...very little...erm poll...pollu...pollution.'

4 Question: 'What facilities are there near your home?'

Which seems the best way to ask for this question to be repeated?

- a) 'I'm sorry I didn't catch that. Could you repeat it please?'
- b) 'I don't understand. Can you say it again?'
- c) 'What are 'facilities', please? I need to hear the question again.'

5 Which response to the Topic 1 question in activity 4 seems the clearest?

- a) 'There are facilities, yes, there are a park, I go sometimes, a sports ground for I think for soccer. Kids go there, from street where I live.'
- b) 'There are lots – a park, for example, which I go to sometimes, and a sports ground, for soccer, I think. Some of the kids from my street go there.'
- c) 'Near my home are lots facilities, like there is a park for me to go there and a soccer sports ground for street kids from where I live in.'



Activities 6–9 will help you to build stronger responses to questions on Topic 2:

Topic 2 Let's move on to talk about friends

6 Question: 'Do you have many friends or just one or two?'

Complete this response using the expressions in the box below.

'I have _____ of friends... some from right back when I was at school, others from various jobs I've had, and there are the friends I play _____ with. I've always been a _____ sort of person so I find it easy to _____ on with people when I _____ them. But, I _____ I'd say I only have one or two _____ friends – friends I completely trust, I _____.'

suppose mean true meet sport friendly get loads

7 Question: 'How often do you see your friends?'

Which response has some high level vocabulary and idioms in it?

a) 'I don't have much chance to catch up with my old friends at the moment, as I'm studying here in Australia and they're not, but I often bump into my new friends at college here, and we hang out together.'

b) 'Most of my old friends are back at home, and I'm here in Australia. I have lots of new friends from college and we like to meet up and do things...all sorts of things together. It's good.'

c) 'Wow...Let me see...I don't see my school friends much...as they're at home and I'm not...if you know what I mean...so I don't see them often...but my new Aussie, college friends...well, of course, I see them all the time...too much maybe!'

8 Question: 'Are you good at making new friends? (Why?/Why not?)'

Which response is the most grammatically accurate?

- a) 'As I say, I'm pretty good at make friend because I'm easygoing and I like meet new people when I'm going out to parties or thing like that.'
- b) 'As I'm saying, I like people so it's easier making friends. I'm good at chatting, you say 'small talk' I think. People seem like me maybe because I laugh much.'
- c) 'As I said just before, I'm a bit shy but I make friends quite easily, maybe because I'm a good listener, and I like asking questions and showing interest in people.'

9 Question: 'Which are more important – friends or family (Why?)'

Which response seems the most interesting and varied answer?

- a) 'I think family is more important, because everyone has a family. Friends sometimes don't last but your family is with you for ever. You always have a family – parents, brothers, sisters and if you're lucky, your grandparents, of course. It's normal to have a lot of family around you.'
- b) 'Family definitely. They are with you and care for you from the beginning of your life, they shape the person you become, they always support you and love you unconditionally. They will always be there if you get into difficulties. Friends don't always feel the same level of responsibility.'
- c) 'Both are important, but family is more important. I really love my mother, and she loves me. It's natural I suppose but it's important to me, and to her. My friends like me and I like them but it's not the same really. It's a different feeling, less important really, at least for me.'



Activities 10–13 will help build stronger responses to questions on Topic 3:

Topic 3	Let's talk now about cars and driving
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10 **Question: 'Can you drive? (Why?/Why not?)'**

Which response uses the most advanced and varied linking expressions?

- a) 'I can't drive at the moment; however, I'd like to learn because it will be useful, even though I don't need to drive as part of my job, as I work in an office.'
- b) 'I can drive, yes. I learnt last year and I have a small car, but I don't drive very often. Petrol is much too expensive for me and I'm only a student.'
- c) 'I've been driving for ten years. In my country it is not easy to learn to drive because lessons are so expensive so it cost me about \$800 to get my licence.'

11 **Question: 'Is traffic increasing on roads in your country?'**

Which response seems the most relevant?

- a) 'There are many cars on our roads, especially taxis. The roads never seem to be quiet, and it's always so noisy and there is a lot of pollution. It's not really safe to drive these days.'
- b) 'The roads are increasing but we need more because the population is increasing very rapidly too. Everyone wants a car and luckily we make our own cars now and they are quite cheap.'
- c) 'It's increasing rapidly, yes. This is mainly because more people can now afford to buy cars, and so the increasing levels of traffic are very noticeable – more traffic jams, and more accidents.'

12 Question: 'How can car accidents be stopped?'

Which response seems too direct and perhaps even a little impolite?

a) 'It's probably unlikely that car accidents can be stopped completely. Life is often too hectic, so people have more difficulty concentrating and the roads are busier. All these factors put ever greater pressure on drivers, I think.'

b) 'They can't. It's not possible. Think about it. Can you drive and answer your mobile phone and remember what you need to buy from the shops, and talk to the children in the back seat. Nor me. That's why there are accidents.'

c) 'It's not possible, really. If you think about it, many drivers have a lot of stress when they drive – stress from other people in the car, mobile phones, time pressure. Put all these together and it's not surprising that accidents happen.'

13 Question: 'How do you feel when you are in a car that is going very fast?'

In which response is hesitation managed most successfully?

a) 'I feel...erm I feel scare...scared because I don't always...I don't trust the driving...sorry the driver. If I know the driver...and I know the driver drives...erm, safer, I mean safely, then I could...can relax a little bit'

b) 'I feel...scare...sorry I meant to say, I feel scared, because I don't always...how can I put it, I don't always trust the driving, I mean driver. If I know the driver...erm or more important, if I know the driver drives...safer, or rather, safely, then I could...or can relax a little bit'

c) 'I feel...I feel scare...scared because I don't always...I don't trust the driving...the driver. If I know the driver...and I know the driver drives...safer, sorry, safely, then I could...I'm sorry, can relax a little bit.'



Activities 14–16 will help you to develop your pronunciation skills

14 Building Awareness of ‘Chunking’

Good speakers group the words they speak into ‘chunks’, which are units of meaning separated by little pauses. This helps the listener to absorb information more easily. The pauses are only very short otherwise fluency is lost and instead the listener may think you are hesitating.

Example

Compare A with B:

A I come from Tehran it’s a really busy city with many markets and mosques

B I come from Tehran • It’s a really busy city • with many markets and mosques

Now try to ‘chunk’ the following responses from Part 1 in a similar way

- 1) I’m sorry I didn’t catch that. Could you repeat it please?
- 2) Yes it’s great. There are plenty of parks with tennis courts and many native plants, flowers and trees.
- 3) As I said just before I’m a bit shy but I make friends quite easily. Maybe because I’m a good listener and I like asking questions and showing interest in people.

Finally, practise saying each sentence in ‘chunks’, using only very short pauses.

15 Building Awareness of Stress and Rhythm

English is a stress-timed language, which means that it follows a pattern a bit like a drumbeat, so some words or sounds are spoken more loudly (stressed) and others are spoken more quickly and softly in a fairly regular time. This establishes rhythm.

Example

Let’s imagine you want to say this sentence:

‘I went for a meal last night but the waiter forgot my order’.

To apply stress and create rhythm you would need to say it a little like this:

I wENt for a MEAl last nIGHt • but the WAIter forGOT my ORder

What is happening in this version of the sentence? Let's analyse it:

- Only part of each stressed word receives the strongest sound (**MAIN STRESS**)
- Some words also have some stress but it is less strong (eg last, but, my)
- The end of a stressed word may become weakly pronounced in order not to disturb the rhythm (eg the 't' sound in 'went' and 'night' may hardly be heard)
- All the unstressed parts (highlighted, e.g. t for a, al last n) are spoken at a faster speed, and each occupies about the same time length, to maintain a spoken rhythm.
- The listener 'catches' the information because it is the information-carrying words that are stressed (**went, meal, night, waiter, forgot, order**)

Analyse these spoken responses from Part 1, using the style in the Example

a) It's normal to have a lot of family around you.

b) ...so the increasing levels of traffic are very noticeable.

c) It's probably unlikely that car accidents can be stopped completely.

d) ...I'm a good listener, and I like asking questions and showing interest in people.

Now, practise saying each sentence and try to build the 'drumbeat' of stress, and the rhythm this generates.

16 Building Awareness of Intonation

Intonation is like the 'song' of a language – it helps you to express your feelings and your personality. But some languages invite more variety of 'song' than others. When you speak English, it really helps to develop a good range of tones (from high to low) because:

- it adds interest to your voice and to the meanings and feelings you are expressing
- it makes the listener feel more focused and more connected to you as a person

A good time to use intonation in IELTS is when you are expressing something you have strong feelings about.

Example

Assessor: Do you like driving?

Speaker A: I LOVE it • it's my TOtal PASSion • I feel complETELY alIVE when I DRive.

Speaker B: L O V E T O tal P A S S ion E T E ly alIVE
I it • it's my • I feel compl when I DRive.

Speaker B lifts the tone on some of the stressed words and also says them a little more slowly at the same time to show how much feeling is involved.

Look at these Part 1 responses. Try to identify parts where a speaker might try to communicate feelings using a higher tone, and a slower delivery.

a) I really love my family, especially my grandmother; she's such a beautiful person.

b) I make friends really easily; in fact I get super excited when I meet new people.

c) I'm a terrible driver. I get totally nervous in heavy traffic, and when I get out of the car I feel like a total wreck! I'm so annoyed with myself about it!

Practice saying these responses in a way which communicates the feelings.



Now listen to Part 1 of Practice Interview 1 (Questions)

Listen to the questions on the recording (or see Page 371) and practice answering as if you were in a real IELTS interview. You can download the interview recording on this webpage: <http://www.ielts-blog.com/isf-downloads/>

If possible, record your answers for later analysis. For example, you could analyse how long your responses were, how varied, fluent, grammatical, and interesting.

This is part of learning about, and managing your spoken performance.

STOP the recording when you get to Part 2 of the Interview.

PART 2 » Giving a Short Talk on a Topic

In Part 2 the assessor gives you a task card. On the card, there is guidance on what aspects of the topic to talk about.

You have one minute to prepare and during that minute you can make notes on a piece of paper. Then you talk for one to two minutes.

Fitness Activities 1–7 for Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking Test



Activities 1–7 will help you train yourself to prepare effectively for the talk and deliver a relevant and coherent speech.

Task Card: An interesting life

Talk about someone you know, or know about, who has had an interesting life.

You should say:

- who the person is
- where the person comes from
- what is interesting about that person's life

and say why that person's life seems interesting to you

- 1 To practice in getting ideas, choose either a), b) or c) below and list four interesting things about the life of the person you choose:

Interesting things Person	1	2	3	4
a) Someone you know well				
b) A famous person				
c) Yourself				

- 2 **Imagine a candidate who received the task card on a person with an interesting life, and has chosen to talk about their brother.**

Match the notes (a-k), about the candidate’s brother, with the 4 parts of the task card.

Notes

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| a) my brother, Pierre | b) born deaf | c) brilliant scholar |
| d) 5 years’ older than me | e) now lives New Zealand | f) took risks, unlike me |
| g) born Paris | h) now an artist | i) sailed solo to NZ |
| j) met his wife in NZ | k) never allowed disability to spoil his life | |

Task Card	<u>Notes (a-k)</u>
1) Who the person is	_____
2) Where the person comes from	_____
3) What is interesting about that person’s life	_____
4) and say why that person’s life seems interesting to you	_____

- 3 **Which beginning to the talk (a, b, or c) seems the most appropriate to you, and why?**

a) My brother is interesting. His name is Pierre. He is five years’ older than me so I’m the younger one. He comes from Paris originally but now he is in New Zealand

b) All right. Well, I suppose all lives are fascinating in some ways, but I’d like to talk briefly about my brother, Pierre. His life has been really extraordinary, at least in my opinion. Let me explain.

c) Pierre is my brother. He’s my older brother in fact – five years older. He has had an interesting life, for sure, very interesting. Mine has been not so interesting. He was born in Paris, in fact we both were born there.

4 Sometimes candidates have trouble talking for two minutes, for different reasons.

Which two of these candidates are having trouble and for what reasons?

a) My brother Pierre, is from Paris. He is interesting because he is deaf. He has done many things – he was good at school, he was an artist, he sailed to New Zealand on his own and got married there. Why is he interesting? Because he never let disability spoil his life, he took risks, not like me.

b) We born...were born...in France...in Paris. His name, my brother's name...is Pierre...and he is five years' more...five years' old...five years' older...of...I mean, than I...me. So...she is...his...he is my grand...big brother...and my...I am a...baby...the baby for...of the family.

c) My brother, Pierre, in fact he's my older brother, as there's five years' difference in our ages, was born in Paris, actually very close to the centre of Paris, where our parents had a very popular local bakery . Although he was born deaf, Pierre was brilliant at school, especially at mathematics and Art...

5 The last part of the task card usually asks you to explain why you think something, so it is an opportunity to offer your opinions instead of just information.

Which one of these last parts does this the best?

a) Why my brother is interesting? He is interesting because he has done all those things – sailing, art, moving to a new country. He has done more things than me. I didn't travel much and don't take many risks, like he does. I tend to stay at home.

b) My brother has always seemed especially interesting to me because he was born deaf and this created distance between us. As a younger brother I wanted to look up to him, but it was not easy as his disability made him seem so different. But he inspired me because he never let his deafness stop him from taking risks, or from seeking adventure.

c) His life is interesting. It is not easy to be a deaf boy and he has still managed to do lots of things, often things that are risky. Sailing to New Zealand was risky but he did it, and he did it alone. It took him nine months, but he finally got there to New Zealand. We met him there...the whole family met him.

- 6 **If you stop talking after only a minute or so, the assessor may invite you to say more. This is a good opportunity to enrich your use of language. If you end just before the two minutes, you can signal the end of your talk.**

Which of these ways of ending your talk seems the most appropriate and polite?

- a) I finish now.
- b) That's it, no more to say. I said it all.
- c) I think that's all I have to say on this topic, for now, anyway.

- 7 **The assessor may ask you a 'rounding off' question after you have finished your talk. You should answer it briefly but try to answer in an interesting way.**

Which of these answers seems the most appropriate?

Assessor: Do you see your brother very often?

- a) No, not really. I live in Paris still and he's in New Zealand. It's a long journey to go from France to there, or even the other way...it takes a long time, too long for me.
- b) No, not often. He doesn't make contact very often...he's busy. I think he's too busy to make regular contact. I'm quite usually busy too most of the time, I must say.
- c) Not as often as I'd like. He came over to Paris last year for our parents' 30th wedding anniversary but flights are a bit too expensive for us to get together regularly.



Now listen to Part 2 of Practice Interview 1 (Questions Only)

Listen to the recording and practice answering as if you were in a real IELTS interview. You can download the interview recording on this webpage:

<http://www.ielts-blog.com/isf-downloads/>

1. After the introduction to Part 2, **pause** the recording for **one minute** to make notes. Here is the task card:

Talk about a time when you were a child and got into trouble.

You should say:

how old you were
what you did that got you into trouble
what happened afterwards

and say why you still remember this occasion

2. After the one minute, **start** the recording again. After you hear, 'Could you start talking now, please', **pause** the recording again and start talking.
3. Start the recording again after **two minutes** and listen to the rounding off question.
4. Answer the question.

STOP the recording when you get to Part 3 of the Interview.

PART 3 » Answering Questions Related to the Topic of Your Talk

In Part 3 the assessor asks you some questions broadly related to the topic of your talk. This is your opportunity to take your use of spoken English to a higher level. The assessor usually starts with a simpler topic.

Fitness Activities 1–5 for Part 3 of the IELTS Speaking Test



Activities 1–5 will help you to build stronger responses to questions in Part 3:

- 1 Which response (a, b, or c) to the first question, extends the topic most but at the same time answers the question relevantly?

Assessor: *Let's talk about exciting activities. Can you tell me about some exciting leisure activities in your culture?*

a) There are many exciting activities in my country. You can do sports, of course, like soccer, and basketball, or you can do more exciting activities like mountain climbing or skiing. It all depends on your interest and your money, of course. Some of these sports cost a lot of money so not everyone can do them. I wasn't able to do such things as a child.

b) It's true that these days people are more interested in exciting activities, even dangerous ones, In my country skydiving has become popular, and also hunting for wild boar. Hunting is dangerous because it is unpredictable, partly because the boars are aggressive and can run very fast. This mix of danger and excitement seems increasingly attractive, at least to some people.

c) I think it all depends on what you think is exciting. I'm not a very brave person so many things are exciting for me. Some of my friends, however, love excitement and like to do more interesting things. If I go for a picnic in the mountains, this is really exciting for me, not the food of course, but the steep places and the views.

2 Occasionally the assessor may respond to your answer with a rounding off question.

Which response (a, b, or c) seems the most relaxed and natural?

Assessor: *Why don't you like dangerous activities?*

- a) I don't know. I don't like them. They seem rather stupid to me. I never liked to do dangerous activities when I was younger, and I'm the same now. I like an easy life not a difficult life. In a nutshell, I like to stay in the land of living.
- b) Why do you think I don't like dangerous activities? I like some. I like skiing for example. That's dangerous sometimes. Some people get killed from skiing accidents, but I never think of that. I like this sport too much.
- c) Well, maybe I'm just a bit of a coward, though I don't think so. I like to think I'm just sensible, that's all. Everyone has to decide what they can or can't do, and so I just try to be careful. I don't think I'm alone, I'm sure many people are like that.

3 The next question might ask you to imagine the situation in the future.

Which of these responses (a, b or c) has the greatest variety of grammar?

Assessor: *Do you think in the future people will choose to lead more dangerous lives?*

- a) Yes, I do for sure. I think people will try to do very unusual things like space trips or they will go on endurance walks in dangerous places with no guide or maybe they will even sleep in haunted houses or shoot rapids on a log.
- b) Yes, more and more dangerous, you're right. It is part of life. People always want to go beyond their limits and other people are happy to take their money and to organise some new dangerous activity, like shark hunting.
- c) It seems likely that this trend will continue, yes. This is probably because people psychologically seek danger even though they know it's risky. However high the risk, there are always people who are willing to have a go.

- 4 The assessor may now move to a slightly more complex topic. This is your chance to discuss ideas in a more complex way using a good variety of language.

Which of these responses (a, b, or c) has the richest use of vocabulary?
Circle any word that you think is a higher level vocabulary item.

Assessor: *Let's talk now about the best ways to build your life. Can you explain why nowadays more young people wait until they are older before they get married?*

- a) I suppose there may be a whole host of reasons, but generally speaking, I think the pressure of building a career is stronger now. In fact, sometimes young graduates struggle to find permanent jobs and if they have a succession of temporary positions they probably don't feel financially secure enough to face the responsibility of marriage. Also, most marriages depend on both partners having the potential to earn good salaries, so for many women a career is built first, and marriage and family is put off until later.
- b) I think there are many reasons but many people need a career today and it is very difficult to find a good job, even if you have been to university. Some people have one temporary job after another and don't think they have enough money to get married. Today husband and wife often both have jobs, and actually both need jobs. Many women try to have a good job before they think about getting married and having children. They will probably work again too even when their children are young.
- c) You have to have a good job these days, it's very important, because it's hard to find a really good job - I mean a job that is not part-time or just for a few months. So without a real job and a good salary many men and many women don't have the confidence to get married, and to have children, especially as children are expensive too! This is a problem for many women, I think, who know they must probably work and have children, so they try to get a good job first and they marry later, have children and then try to work part-time.
- 5 The assessor only needs to use 4 minutes minimum for Part 3 so may not use the full 5 minutes if already confident to judge your level. So, develop all your answers to Part 3 questions with as much range and variety as possible.

In this final question, the assessor asks for comparisons.

Which response (a, b, or c) uses the most effective linking expressions between sentences (e.g. 'However', 'For example') to build coherence in the response?
Read these responses and mark the linking expressions.

Assessor: Do you think your life has been more interesting than your parents' lives?

- a) I don't think it is easy to answer this question. I have certainly travelled more than my parents but it's not easy to say my experiences have been more interesting. My parents had a simple life when they were young but it was rich in its own way. They had more regular contact with members of their extended family – erm cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. I have to say I don't even know some of my cousins as they live in other countries, and are dotted all over the world. Perhaps my life has been less interesting in terms of contact with wider family. Their family life was richer, for sure.
- b) To be honest, I can't really say. Even though I think I've had more opportunities to travel than my parents did, it's not very easy to compare different experiences in terms of level of interest. While my parents' early life was simple, it did have its own richness. Compared to my upbringing, for instance, theirs involved more regular contact with family members. For example, they spent more time with cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, whereas I haven't met some of my cousins, simply because they live in other countries. So, from that point of view, my life has probably been less interesting than theirs.
- c) This is an interesting question. I don't think interest can be compared...it's very personal. OK I know I have travelled more than my parents did. It was interesting for me but different from their early life. My parents' early life tended to be simple but to them I'm sure it was really interesting. I know they had a lot more contact with family members like cousins, aunts and uncles and grandparents than I've had. In fact I don't know many of my cousins and have never even met them. They live all over the world in different countries. So my parents' family life was definitely more interesting than mine, I believe.

**Now listen to Part 3 of Practice Interview 1 (Questions Only)**

Listen to the recording and practice answering as if you were in a real IELTS interview. You can download the interview recording on this webpage:

<http://www.ielts-blog.com/isf-downloads/>

If possible, record your answers and listen to them. It's good practice to re-record your own responses, each time trying to improve some aspect of your language – pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and coherence.



RATED SAMPLE IELTS INTERVIEW (Audio time: 12 min)

Did you answer all the questions for the practice interview in the previous section? Well done! For comparison, you might now like to listen to Pragnesh practising a full, IELTS interview. Here's what to do:

1. Download the interview recording on this webpage: <http://www.ielts-blog.com/isf-downloads/>
2. Start the sample interview recording and follow the transcript below. Pause the recording any time you want to compare what Pragnesh says with the suggested 'better responses' alongside the transcript.
3. After you have listened to the interview, read the detailed analysis of his performance, noting the discussion of the four IELTS assessment criteria.
4. For practice, try answering each of the assessor's questions yourself!
5. Later, try some of the many test practice questions/topics (Pages 312-328) and try out one or two of the many idioms (Pages 305-311).
6. It's an excellent idea to record your own responses and to analyse your own spoken English while trying to move it closer to IELTS styles.

Pragnesh Speaking Interview Transcript, Part 1

Speaker	Original Version	A better response would be...
Assessor:	Hello my name is Sally Robinson. Could you tell me your full name, please?	
Pragnesh:	<i>Er hello Sally, my name is Pragnesh...Pragnesh Takka but you can call me Pragnesh, if you like, yeah</i>	<i>Er hello Sally, my name is Pragnesh...Pragnesh Takka but you can call me Pragnesh, if you like</i>
Assessor:	Can I see your identification?	
Pragnesh:	<i>Yeah, sure... here is my passport, and I guess that should serve the purpose</i>	<i><u>Yes, of course...</u> here is my passport, I imagine that should serve the purpose</i>
Assessor:	Thank you. Now in Part 1 of the interview I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself.. Let's talk about where you live, Pragnesh. What kind of apartment or house are you living in at the moment?	
Pragnesh:	<i>Er..I live in er...a three-bedroomed house...at the moment, er... which is single storey...yeah</i>	<i>Er..I live in a three-bedroomed house...at the moment, <u>it has just a single storey</u></i>
Assessor:	And what do you like about your house?	
Pragnesh:	<i>Er well our house is located in one of the close roads so that's er I guess that is the most er beautiful thing I like about that...we don't have much of ...an... a traffic er going through the street... so that is good... er...we have got er a lovely neighbourhood as well...er...in close look we have only eight houses there...very good neighbours.. yeah it's nice place to live in</i>	<i>Er well our house is located in a <u>cul de sac</u> which I suppose is the most attractive thing about it...we don't have much traffic <u>going past the street...</u> which is good...we live in a lovely <u>neighbourhood</u> as well...with only eight houses there... and very good neighbours... yeah <u>it's a really nice place to live in</u></i>
Assessor:	How far is your house from public transport and shops?	

Speaker Original Version

Pragnesh: Well..er..we are just one street away from the public transport..er we can use it..er..as and when needed...er we are a little bit far from the shopping area er but I guess like er it's OK we most of us... most of the time we rely on..er private transport. I have got my own car so er shopping and things are not too bad to go through...so that's quite OK with me at the moment

Assessor: If you could change er one thing in your house, what would it be?

Pragnesh: Er...well...er I'm quite happy at the moment so it's a difficult question for me to answer...er... but I guess...er I might go more er near the shopping area that will help me when ...er... I don't have my own car so I can go easily there ...go walking there...er... I guess that will help me

Assessor: Thank you. Let's go to talk about eating now. What foods do you eat that are really healthy?

Pragnesh: Er...well...er I'm a vegetarian person so er...er main part of er like er quite lot we rely on salads and fruit and er that I guess is..quite a healthier part of my diet...mm

Assessor: Do you eat sweet things very often?

Pragnesh: Oh yes I love my sweets

Assessor: Why?

Pragnesh: er like culturally a part of India where I belong...like...er...er sweet is a core er...component of our food anyway, so er most most of time we have sweet at least once or twice a day... so...er I have grown in that culture and I love my sweets

Assessor: Are you eating healthier food now than you were when you were a child?

Pragnesh: Er..unfortunately not...er...as a kid...er well I was er grown in an environment where my parents...er ...used to er encourage more healthier foods now than what I'm having now I don't have any limitations on that ...and I guess I'm not the right person to choose my foods.

Assessor: I'd like you to talk about your evenings now, Pragnesh. (Yeah) How do you usually spend your evenings?

A better response would be...

Well..we are just one street away from public transport..so we can easily use it as and when needed...we are a little bit far from the shopping centre er but it's generally OK because most of the time we rely on private transport as I have my own car so shopping and things like that are not hard to do...so overall everything is really good at the moment

Er..well..as I said, I'm quite happy at the moment so it's a difficult question for me to answer..but perhaps it might be more convenient.er to be located a little nearer to the shopping area as that would help me whenever I didn't have my car and could easily walk there. I think that would be helpful

Er..well.I'm a vegetarian so the main part of ...so we rely quite a lot on salads and fruit and that I suppose is the healthiest aspect of my diet..mm

Oh yes I love sweet things

er well culturally, in the part of India where I belong sweet things are a core component of our food anyway, so most of the time we eat sweet things at least once or twice a day... and as I grew up in that culture, I love sweet things

Er...unfortunately not as a child...er well I grew up in an environment where my parents...used to encourage me to eat healthy foods but now they are not around so no one is putting any restrictions on my diet ...and I'm probably not the best person to choose my diet.

Speaker Original Version

Pragnesh: *Er...most of time when I er return from...from work...er I spend my evenings er with family er...I'd prefer to go out for walking...er but unfortunately it's not possible all the time...er but whenever time permit I would prefer to go out for the walking with family and... er that's what I like...er we have got lovely er...garden near our pl...our house so that's where I want to go.*

A better response would be...

...most of the time after I get back.from work...er I spend my evenings with family. Actually, I'd prefer to go out for walks, but unfortunately it's not always possible...but whenever time permits I enjoy going out for walks with my family and ...there's a lovely garden near our house so that's where we like to go.

Assessor: Are you ever tired in the evening?

Pragnesh: *Ah...yes...a few days It depends how busy you are at work and that's the reason I said earlier cause it's not possible all the time but when I'm not tired I would go for walking and things, yeah*

Ah...yes...on some days. It depends how busy I am at work and as I said earlier even though it's not possible all the time, when I'm not tired I really enjoy walking, and things like that

Assessor: Do you sometimes eat late in the evening?

Pragnesh: *Er I would say quite often...er I'm a late-night person so I like to fini...tidy off my...all... most of the things doing late night...and even as...er...eating...like...er... culturally we have our er dinner er most of time...quite late as well, yeah*

Er I would say quite often...er I'm a late-night person so I like to finish off ... any work I need to complete, late at night...and in my culture we tend to have our dinner quite late most of the time, anyway

Assessor: Mm..Thank you.

Pragnesh Speaking Interview Transcript, Part 2**Speaker Original Version**

Assessor: Now I'm going to give you a topic and I'd like you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before you talk there will be one minute to think about what you are going to say, and to make notes. Is that OK?

A better response would be...

Pragnesh: *Er yeah sure*

Er Yes, that's fine

Assessor: So here's a pencil and a paper for making notes and here's your topic. Er could you talk about an occasion when someone gave you money

Pragnesh: *OK
(preparation time begins)*

Assessor: All right. Remember, you have two minutes for your talk, so don't worry if I stop you. I'll let you know when the two minutes is up. So could you start talking now, please?

Speaker Original Version

Pragnesh: Yeah, sure. Er...well...er... I er remember the occasion when I er received some money from my dad on er my birthday when I was in Year 10 er I remember it very well 'cause that was the time when I wanted the money very badly er I was grew up in an area like in a time when er video games are quite new and I was...er like we were one of the middle class families so I didn't use to get a lot of pocket money and I didn't manage to get one of those video games from my saving from my pocket money er...

One of my very close friend got a video game as a gift on his birthday and I was.. I used to be very jealous with that and I desperately wanted to buy one of those video games ...erm...er ...and unfortunately I was short of money so I couldn't er afford that...er but luckily my birthday came up and I er received a handsome money from my dad.

That was the time when I liked it a lot and I straightaway bought my video game from that and yeah so er well those days like er...before that birthday most of the time I used to get gifts on my birthday and er I was not having a choice to what to buy from that so I was forced to use what I was given as a gift but when I received money I got the choice to er decide where I can spend my money and luckily I had enough money so that I managed to give a er party for my friends from the money spared after buying the video game...yeah

Assessor: Thank you. Do people often give you money?

Pragnesh: Er...not now er but as a kid I used to get er money quite often er traditionally like when there was some ok like festival comes in er we used to go to our parents and grandparents and we used to get either money or gift as a like their best wishes.

Assessor: Thank you. I'll take the paper and pencil back now (Yeah)

A better response would be...

Yes certainly. Well, I remember the occasion when I received some money from my dad on my birthday, when I was in Year 10. I remember it very well because that was the time when I wanted the money very badly. I'll explain why. I grew up during the time when video games were quite new. We were one of the middle class families so I didn't use to get a lot of pocket money and I couldn't manage to save up enough to buy one of those video games.

However, one of my very close friends was given a video game as a gift on his birthday and I was.. er I used to be very jealous of him, and desperately wanted to buy one of those video games for myself. Unfortunately I was short of money so I couldn't afford it...but luckily my birthday came along and I received a handsome sum of money from my dad.

At that time I liked getting money a lot and straightaway I bought my video game. Perhaps I should say that before that birthday most of the time I used to get gifts on my birthday and so I had no choice of what to buy and was forced to make use of the gifts I was given, but, when I received money on that occasion, for the first time I could choose where to spend my money...in fact, luckily I had more than enough money so I even managed to throw a party for my friends from the money left over after buying the video game.

Er...not now, but as a kid I used to be given money quite often...traditionally when there was some sort of festival we used to go to our parents and grandparents and we used to receive either money or gifts from them with their best wishes.

Pragnesh Speaking Interview Transcript, Part 3

Speaker Original Version

A better response would be...

Assessor: So you've been talking about some money that someone gave you and I'd like to discuss with you a few more questions related to this topic (*Sure*) So, first of all let's consider money as a gift.. erm When do people often give money to others in your culture?

Pragnesh: *Er on like quite of... quite often during the festival season when we go to elderly people oh erm our parents and grandparents they offer money or gift as a best wishes. Er...and then er on birthdays or when you achieve something in your studies or erm your exams...yeah*

Er well, quite often money is given during the festival season when we go to visit the older generations, like parents and grandparents, and they offer money or gifts...and then also on birthdays, as I told you earlier or when you achieve something in your studies, or pass your exams

Assessor: Do you think giving a present is better than giving money, though?

Pragnesh: *er..it depends. Er the answer is yes and no er as a kid er mostly they don't have a rough a gross idea about what they should be spending money on so quite often there is a risk involved that er kids can be spoiled by giving them money er but er and at the same time er if they receive a gift as a present then they don't have the choice as well...so er it's a difficult one to answer on.*

er. I think it depends. Probably the answer is both yes and no. Most kids don't have a clear idea about what they should be spending money on so quite often there is a risk involved that kids can be spoiled if they are given money, but at the same time if they receive a gift as a present then they don't have any choice so it's a difficult one to answer definitively.

Assessor: Well do you think parents give money to children more often now than in the past?

Pragnesh: *er... with my best knowledge er 'yes' is the answer 'cause these days kids are more particular about what they want and quite often they get annoyed when they don't get the gift what they want so erm at the same time parents are they are quite busy with work and everything so they try to avoid spending time on getting the right gift rather they would give money to the kids I don't know whether that's a right or wrong thing.*

er.. To the best of my knowledge, I think 'yes' is the answer because these days kids are more particular about what they want and quite often they get annoyed when they don't get the gift they want. At the same time parents these days are quite busy at work and everything, so they try to avoid wasting time trying to get the perfect gift and would rather give money to their kids. I can't decide whether that's a right or a wrong thing, though.

Assessor: Thank you, Pragnesh. Let's talk now about money and personal values. Er..why do you think so many people these days want to be rich?

Speaker Original Version

Pragnesh: *er well these days the gap is er increasing quite a lot between rich and poor people and er with globalisation or more often or more so with the audio visual medias people know what rich people can do and that's why they want to achieve all those things that they don't have in their life er...so...er now even the poor and middle class people can see the lifestyle of celebrities and more rich people and they want to get all those things for they don't have in their life so they er spend er...money's very important for them.*

Assessor: What about you, could you live a simple life in the future and live without money?

Pragnesh: *I would love to, but the honest answer is no I would rather have er more money and decide where I can spend them.*

Assessor: Finally, let's talk a little about money in the world. Erm what is your explanation for why the wealth gap between rich and poor people is becoming wider in many societies?

Pragnesh: *Er well er a difficult question for me to answer I've never given er thought to that er but. er I guess like er er with current economical policies er where er they are trying to er get more equalisation in the society but the risk involved in this that in developed countries like Australia and Canada say they give lots of social er money like er social service money to the poor people and quite often they encourage people not to do work cause if er people can get easy money without working what is currently happening in quite a few developed countries that's one of the major risk involved in that lately quite a few stories are coming up where people declare themselves disabled just because they can get easy money so er with the policies government is doing right thing by er getting the poor er trying to improve the quality of life in poor people but at the same time there is a risk involved where er there is a group of people who want to take advantage of that.*

Assessor: Thank you Pragnesh That is the end of the interview.

Pragnesh: *Thank you.*

A better response would be...

er Well these days it's true the gap between rich and poor people is increasing noticeably. But, with globalisation and with the spread of audiovisual media people now know how rich people live and that's why they want to acquire all those things that they don't yet have in their own lives. Nowadays even the poor and middle class people can see the lifestyles of celebrities and other rich people and so they want to surround themselves with all the material goods they don't have in their lives and this is why money has become increasingly important to them.

I would love to, but the honest answer is no. I would rather have more money and then decide what to spend it on.

Er well that's a difficult question for me to answer as I've never really given it much thought, but I think that the current economic policies, which are trying to build more equality in society, also involve some risks. For instance, in developed countries like Australia and Canada many less well-off people receive social security or social services and quite often this encourages them not to work, for the simple reason that if people can get easy money without working, and this is something that is currently happening in quite a few developed countries, then that's one of the major risks involved. There have been quite a few stories lately of people declaring themselves to be disabled just to make themselves eligible to receive easy government money, so, although by adopting these policies governments are doing the right thing by trying to improve the quality of life of poor people, at the same time there is a risk involved whenever there are groups of people who want to take advantage of that.

Analysis of Pragnesh's Sample IELTS Interview

This evaluation is not an official IELTS score; it is a formal evaluation and an impression score prepared by a highly experienced teacher, based on the publicly available IELTS assessment guidelines.

The teacher has tried to analyse the student's strong and weak parts and this will give you a better understanding of how to perform better in the IELTS Speaking Test.

Fluency and Coherence

Pragnesh is typical of many speakers of English from the Indian subcontinent – he is very fluent, and has no difficulty at all in understanding all the questions put to him. His answers all make sense and are appropriate responses, though his answers are not always enriched in terms of content, and his ideas not always well linked.

His way of speaking, however, displays one or two features meriting separate consideration.

- Firstly, he has a constant verbal tic (a sort of repetitive speaking habit) in the form of **the sound 'er' which he uses all the time** (and he **repetitively overuses the word 'yeah' also**, though to a lesser extent). This represents a form of hesitation, but because he speaks so quickly and easily, it seems difficult to classify it as part of a major mental struggle to communicate in English. Nevertheless it is a negative aspect.
- The **speed of his speech**, while showing fluency on the one hand, is also a slight problem, in the sense that he sometimes **swallows words** before they have been uttered clearly or fully. This puts an occasional, slight level of strain on the listener and occasionally weakens the overall coherence of his responses.
- Finally, Pragnesh tends to **repeat the same information** in slightly paraphrased form, rather than trying to develop and enrich the ideas he presents. This reduces the overall quality of coherence in his ideas and possibly also reduces the quality of the connection with the assessor, and the assessor's level of interest in the ideas being expressed.

It is these factors that would need to be weighed up when assigning him a score in this area.

Lexical Resource

Pragnesh has an effective functional vocabulary, meaning that he has no difficulty talking on any subject or in any situation. However, his **range of vocabulary is sometimes limited and repetitive**, and he **tends not to enrich his speech with less common (more advanced) vocabulary** choices which might add more colour, texture, interest and precision. This is related also to his **limited ability to develop ideas**. Occasionally, however, he comes out with something impressive (examples: 'core component'; 'whenever time permit'; 'short of money'; 'declare themselves disabled'; 'easy money'; 'major risks involved'; 'take advantage of that'; 'quality of life').

In terms of the final score for this criterion, the only occasional use of less common (more advanced) expressions may not be quite enough to outweigh the overall effect of his generally limited range and repetitive use of vocabulary.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Again, Pragnesh is fairly typical of many Indian speakers of English in the sense that he has developed a variety of spoken English that in some ways is not quite standard to, say a British or Australian native speaker of English, since **he makes little grammatical errors constantly (for instance tense errors, word form errors)**, but they are errors which don't impede successful communication or comprehension. At the same time, and, again like many speakers of English from India, he uses English grammar in a somewhat limited way, which means he **doesn't display a very wide range of grammatical options or range of constructions**, which in turn tends to make **his grammatical formulations a little repetitive**. It is these factors that would be limiting his ability to be assigned a really high score.

Pronunciation

This is often a troublesome area of language for Indian speakers of English, as once again they have long experience of speaking English but are exposed to varieties of spoken English that may not be standard and often difficult for native speakers of English in the US, Australia or Britain, for example, to follow. Pragnesh's great strength in terms of pronunciation is his use of intonation. He maintains the listener's interest by frequent changes of tone, and this makes him sound engaging, interesting, and natural. Sometimes Indian speakers are much more monotone with unusual stress patterns that cause the listener to lose the sense of what is being said. Pragnesh is also easy to understand most of the time, except when he swallows the occasional word by speaking too fast. His stress patterns and 'chunking' of phrases are generally effective and aid the listener's comprehension. On balance, then, he is effective in terms of pronunciation, but **might be penalised for the negative impacts of speed of speech** on ease of understanding.

SUMMARY

In terms of IELTS, it is likely that Pragnesh would score quite well for Fluency and Coherence and quite well for Pronunciation and possibly Vocabulary, but might struggle to be rewarded as highly for Grammar. He is a good example of a candidate hovering overall around the **Band 7 level**. There are many IELTS candidates in a similar situation.

How could he gain a higher score?

There are one or two simple things that Pragnesh could do and are within his existing ability.

1. **He could slow down a little** – by relaxing (especially if nervousness makes him speak so fast), and by practicing more under IELTS-like conditions to get more used to the ‘rhythm’ of the test.

He needs to be more aware of **achieving balance between speed of speech and content**. Based on this interview it seems clear that in order not to fall silent or to seem limited during the interview, he prefers to use repetition of individual expressions and repetition of ideas. This may not be the best balance. Sometimes non-native speakers of English from India fall into the trap of ‘over-talking’ (often at high speed).

He **needs to understand the usefulness and power of short pauses between ideas and ‘chunks’ of speech**. These pauses act to highlight the ideas being communicated and also give the listener time to follow and evaluate them. In fact, **‘over-talking’ can sometimes lead to ‘under-meaning’** (not actually having many different ideas to offer and using a limited language repertoire). This combination of **fast, non-stop (no pause) speech and low content is very tiring to listen to** and may even reduce the perceived value of the language displayed.

2. He should try consciously to insert more, **higher level or idiomatic expressions** into his answers (especially in Part 3) to give the vocabulary score a chance of being lifted. He probably has more vocabulary at his disposal, but has got into a ‘functional’ speaking habit (i.e. regarding communication of his ideas in simple language as being enough). In an IELTS test he probably needs to focus on **DISPLAYING** appropriate language, not just answering all questions as if they are everyday conversations. His strategy for this language test encounter should be looking at every question as an opportunity to demonstrate (appropriately, of course) the higher level expressions he knows. Again, more practice can achieve this. At the same time Pragnesh needs to learn how to develop ideas in order to generate greater variety of expression. He could record himself giving answers and then analyse the recording to assess the level of repetition and try to come up with new ideas with which to develop his points and then re-record those sections in order to feel the difference in quality and range of content.
3. He might try to move to a **slightly more formal style** in the latter parts of the test, where the questions can be more abstract, discussion questions. He would also benefit from more practice at **extending and developing slightly more complex ideas** in Part 3 of the interview so that expression of ideas gives rise more naturally to maturity and richness of language.

Going over typical Speaking topics and thinking about ideas to talk about during exam preparation is a good idea. It may help with developing views and opinions on a wide range of subjects.

4. He should try to make fewer grammatical mistakes. It would probably not be as easy for Pragnesh to change his grammatical patterns very quickly as many of them are by now probably ‘fossilized’ (‘stuck’) and represent the variety of English he has probably been using for a long time in a different cultural context. But, nevertheless, he could get more control over his sentence patterns with practice.

TOP SCORE VOCABULARY FOR THE SPEAKING TEST

Using occasional, idiomatic or phrasal expressions in your IELTS interview can enrich vocabulary. However, they need to be used **naturally and only occasionally**.

'Sounding natural' is really important when trying to achieve a higher score. It means being fluent and using language in a way that makes the listener feel they are talking to someone who could belong to the same language community.

Below is a list of expressions, each with a meaning and an example of possible use in the Speaking test. Asterisk (*) shows **the most flexible, and perhaps frequently used expressions**.

Expression	Meaning	How to use in a Speaking test
* a drop in the ocean	a very small amount compared to the amount needed	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you give money to charity? <i>You:</i> No I don't, mainly because I feel that my \$50 donation would only be a drop in the ocean .
a lost soul	without direction or purpose	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you feel you belong in Australia now? <i>You:</i> In some ways, yes, but deep down I'm still a bit of a lost soul .
a real can of worms	uncovering a range of complex problems	<i>Assessor:</i> Have you ever had to solve a tricky problem at work? <i>You:</i> Yes, I once found out that someone at work had a criminal record and it was a real can of worms when I tried to sack him.
a straight talker	someone who talks directly and openly	<i>Assessor:</i> What can you tell me about your best friend? <i>You:</i> My best friend, Paul, is a really straight talker ; he never just tries to say what I would like to hear.
all at sea	very confused	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you adapt well in new situations? <i>You:</i> Yes, eventually, but I tend to be all at sea at first, until things settle down.
* at the end of the day	finally/in the end	<i>Assessor:</i> Overall then, which is more important to you - love or respect? <i>You:</i> At the end of the day , it all depends on your priorities at different times.
drop dead gorgeous	very attractive	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you know a person who is very attractive? <i>You:</i> Yes, a friend of mine. She's a beauty; I mean she is drop dead gorgeous .
full of beans	has a lot of energy	<i>Assessor:</i> Is it true that children have more energy than adults? <i>You:</i> Oh yes, my son, for example, is always full of beans .

life in the fast lane	to seek many colourful experiences in order to chase success or self-improvement	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you enjoy taking risks? <i>You:</i> Well, you only live once, don't you, and I've always liked life in the fast lane .
life in the slow lane	life without any excitement or danger	<i>Assessor:</i> How do you feel about extreme sports? <i>You:</i> Well, some people go for them, but they're not for me - I prefer life in the slow lane .
nothing to write home about	mediocre/not as good as expected	<i>Assessor:</i> Have you seen any new movies lately? <i>You:</i> Yes, I saw the new Spielberg movie, but it was nothing to write home about .
* over the top	excessive	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you think a CEO can ruin a company? <i>You:</i> To blame one person for the collapse of the whole company seems to be a bit over the top .
quality time	time spent with someone without distractions	<i>Assessor:</i> If you could change something about your life, what would it be? <i>You:</i> I would work less and instead spend more quality time with my children.
* the bottom line	the final outcome	<i>Assessor:</i> Children these days often argue that learning in a classroom should be replaced with online studies, do you agree? <i>You:</i> The methods may vary, but the bottom line is they still need to go to school.
* the tip of the iceberg	the visible part of something but the main part is hidden	<i>Assessor:</i> Is there any corruption in your country? <i>You:</i> Yes, one of our government ministers was arrested recently for stealing public money and I'm pretty sure it's only the tip of the iceberg .
tough love	helping someone to change their behavior by treating them in a very severe way	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you believe in strong discipline? <i>You:</i> Well my dad was really strict, but I think his brand of tough love helped me to become more responsible.

Expression (verbal)	Meaning	How to use in a Speaking test
* I fancy a (something)	I would like a (something)	Assessor: Do you have a favourite café or restaurant? You: Definitely, there is a little cafe that I always go to when I fancy a coffee, and also the cupcakes they serve are heavenly.
* to be a disaster	to end very badly	Assessor: Are you good at building relationships? You: No, I'm afraid I'm not. My last relationship was a (complete) disaster .
* to be a joke	to be ridiculous, or ineffective	Assessor: Do you think the government should do more to protect the environment? You: With all due respect to the government of my country, their current attempts to protect the environment are a joke .
to be a waste of space	to be useless	Assessor: If you had a problem, would you ask your neighbour for help? You: My neighbour is a waste of space ; I wouldn't even bother.
to be an outsider	to be a stranger, new to something	Assessor: Have you got many friends in the place where you live? You: I'm still a bit of an outsider in my town, even 10 years after moving there.
* to be put out	to be offended/annoyed	Assessor: How did you feel when you didn't get that job? You: I was a bit put out when they sent me the rejection letter.
* to be up against it	to experience difficulties created by a situation or a group of people	Assessor: Have you ever been in a difficult situation? You: Yes, when I had to apply for my visa and saw all the paperwork involved, I realized that I was really up against it .
to be up on (something)	have good, up-to-date knowledge of (something)	Assessor: What are your interests? You: I like sports, especially football. I'm really up on the Premier League in the UK; I know all the teams.
to bite the bullet	to take an unpleasant action or decision	Assessor: Have you ever had to make an unpleasant decision? You: Yes, I once had to quit a well-paid job. It wasn't a good career move but I just had to bite the bullet .
to come together	to happen in a satisfactory way, without problems	Assessor: How did you feel when you found a new job? You: Like my life was finally starting to come together .
to do (something) up	to make improvements	Assessor: What would you like to change about your house? You: Everything! The whole place needs doing up .
to drink like a fish	to drink large amounts of alcohol regularly	Assessor: Do you think that drinking alcohol can be dangerous? You: Well, I suppose if you drink like a fish , you have to expect health problems.

to drive like a madman	to drive like an idiot	<i>Assessor:</i> How do you feel about bad driving habits? <i>You:</i> I wouldn't get in a car with a bad driver, such as my neighbour - he drives like a madman .
* to drop in on (someone)	to spontaneously visit (someone) without arranging the visit in advance	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you ever visit your family without calling first? <i>You:</i> Well, yes, I enjoy dropping in on my mother at the weekend sometimes, to give her a nice surprise.
to drop off	to fall asleep	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you enjoy your course? <i>You:</i> Well, I'm usually so tired after my part-time job that I often drop off in the middle of the lectures. I don't snore, though!
to eat like a horse	to eat large amounts of food	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you teach your child about a healthy diet? <i>You:</i> Well, I'm always telling him that if he keeps on eating like a horse , and then just watching TV, he may end up overweight.
to feel a bit of a fool	to feel silly	<i>Assessor:</i> How did you feel about making that kind of mistake? <i>You:</i> I felt a bit of a fool , I suppose.
* to find a way	to manage to complete a difficult task	<i>Assessor:</i> Is it important to be adaptable in life? <i>You:</i> I believe so, and one of my friends is a good example. He always tends to find a way to get what he wants.
* to fit in	to be socially adaptable	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you usually adapt well in new social situations? <i>You:</i> No, not always. I remember that I never seemed to fit in at school, for example.
* to get on (someone's) nerves	to annoy (someone)	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you always enjoy work? <i>You:</i> To tell you the truth, my boss gets on my nerves sometimes.
* to get on top of	to be in control of	<i>Assessor:</i> Are you a good student? <i>You:</i> I'm afraid not - but I'd like to be. I need to get on top of all my subject material.
* to get on well with (someone)	to understand someone well when you interact	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you have good relationships with people at work? <i>You:</i> My team is rather small, it's just my colleague Peter and I, and luckily I get on very well with him .
* to get (someone) down	to annoy (someone) or make (someone) feel downcast	<i>Assessor:</i> How do you feel when you make mistakes in English? <i>You:</i> It usually gets me down because I seem to make so many.
* to get together	to meeting someone	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you prefer to spend time with family or friends? <i>You:</i> Well, I enjoy getting together with friends – less stressful, to be honest.
to give (someone) a talking to	to reprimand	<i>Assessor:</i> Have you ever had a problem with your supervisor at work? <i>You:</i> Yes, as a matter of fact, not too long ago my boss gave me a talking to about being late for work.

* to go for it	to try it	<i>Assessor:</i> Are you a focused person? <i>You:</i> I would say so. If I believe something is worth the effort, I really go for it .
* to go on and on about	to talk excessively about	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you think education is important? <i>You:</i> Personally I don't, but my parents are always going on and on about the importance of education.
* to go out of my way	to make an effort	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you think fairness is important? <i>You:</i> Personally, I do. I go out of my way to be fair with everyone.
to go out on a limb	to say or do something very differently from most people	<i>Assessor:</i> Do others feel the same way as you do about this? <i>You:</i> Probably not, I tend to go out on a limb about most things.
to have a stroke of luck	to have a lucky happening	<i>Assessor:</i> Have you ever been late submitting an assignment to your teacher? <i>You:</i> Unfortunately yes, there was a time when I wasn't able to finish my homework in time but I had a stroke of luck because my teacher was suddenly ill with flu for a week.
to jump up and down	to be agitated or annoyed	<i>Assessor:</i> What did your parents think when you left your current job? <i>You:</i> Oh my dad jumped up and down for a while until I explained that I had been headhunted by a better company.
to land a ...	to achieve something, perhaps with a bit of luck	<i>Assessor:</i> Have you changed jobs recently? <i>You:</i> No, personally I haven't, but my sister has just landed a great job as a lawyer.
to live it up	to enjoy life while spending a lot of money	<i>Assessor:</i> How do you feel about saving money? <i>You:</i> I just like to live it up , so with such an extravagant lifestyle I never save much.
to make a meal out of (something)	to take longer than necessary doing something	<i>Assessor:</i> What do you find the most difficult thing about supervising others? <i>You:</i> I suppose it sometimes seems difficult to get people to do pretty simple things. For example, last week I asked my secretary to write a short memo and she made a real meal out of it .
to make (someone) see red	to make (someone) very angry	<i>Assessor:</i> Are there any forms of behaviour that you find irritating? <i>You:</i> Well, yes, when people fail to take responsibility for their mistakes it makes me see red .
* to make up (someone's) mind	to come to a decision which is unlikely to change	<i>Assessor:</i> Are you good at making decisions? <i>You:</i> You bet I am! Once I've made up my mind to do something, nothing stands in my way.
* to make up with	to resolve differences	<i>Assessor:</i> Are you a forgiving person? <i>You:</i> I can be, especially with my girlfriend, every time she wants to make up with me after an argument.

* to overdo it	to do too much	<i>Assessor:</i> How do you feel about dieting? <i>You:</i> Dieting can be helpful, but people shouldn't overdo it .
to play their hearts out	to make a real effort	<i>Assessor:</i> Have you ever been to a music festival in your country? <i>You:</i> Yes, and actually I really enjoyed the street musicians the most because they were playing their hearts out .
to put it bluntly	to express an opinion in a harsh form	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you think professionalism is important? <i>You:</i> I think it is very important. I have no respect for people who, to put it bluntly , are no good at what they do.
to put it diplomatically	to express an opinion in a gentle form	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you perform well at work? <i>You:</i> Putting it diplomatically , I have much room for improvement.
to put (someone's) life on the line	to do everything possible	<i>Assessor:</i> Did you try hard enough to get that contract? <i>You:</i> I pretty much put my life on the line to get that deal to succeed.
* to put (something) off	to postpone something	<i>Assessor:</i> Have you ever had to change your vacation plans? <i>You:</i> Yes, unfortunately. On one occasion due to pressure at work I had to put off my vacation for a few weeks.
* to run out of time	the time allocated has ended	<i>Assessor:</i> We've run out of time , so that is the end of the Speaking test.
to run (someone) down	to criticize (someone)	<i>Assessor:</i> What sort of relationship do you have with your neighbour? <i>You:</i> My neighbour is a strange person. I don't want to run him down but there are certain things about him I don't approve of.
to say it like it is	to speak honestly	<i>Assessor:</i> What do people at work think of you? <i>You:</i> I think some people respect me because I tend to say it like it is ; I never try to hide the truth.
* to see the good side of	to understand the advantage of	<i>Assessor:</i> How do you feel about working in the healthcare industry? <i>You:</i> I can certainly see the good side of trying to help people in need.
to set eyes on (something/someone)	to see for the first time	<i>Assessor:</i> How would you describe your recent holiday destination? <i>You:</i> Quite frankly, as soon as I set eyes on Antigua I knew it was the place for me.
* to take a good look at	to give careful attention to	<i>Assessor:</i> Are you worried about your weight? <i>You:</i> Well, I think I certainly need to take a good look at my diet.
* to take it easy	to relax	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you often feel stressed at work? <i>You:</i> No I don't. I try to take it easy as much as I can.

to take it on the chin	to accept consequences stoically	<i>Assessor:</i> How well do you handle unpleasant surprises? <i>You:</i> Well, I don't fall apart. When my manager told me I was fired, it was a real shock, but I took it on the chin .
* to take it out on (someone)	to vent anger on (someone)	<i>Assessor:</i> What do you think is the secret to having a good relationship in a family? <i>You:</i> Patience. Whenever I am frustrated, I try not to take it out on my partner.
* to take (someone) up on (something)	to accept	<i>Assessor:</i> If your boss were to offer you a better paid position but with additional responsibilities, how would you react? <i>You:</i> I'd still probably take him up on that.
* to talk behind (someone's) back	to criticize a person, but only in a conversation with others.	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you enjoy your job? <i>You:</i> The job is fine, but some of my co-workers are not, especially those who talk behind your back .
* to talk (someone) into doing something	to convince (someone) to do something	<i>Assessor:</i> How would you solve a dispute between yourself and a neighbour? <i>You:</i> I would try to talk the neighbor into coming over to my house for a cup of tea. Getting to know each other better would help.
to try to talk straight	to speak frankly and directly	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you think being honest is important? <i>You:</i> Yes I do. I try to talk straight and I expect everyone else to speak openly and directly.
to work oneself to death	to be overworked	<i>Assessor:</i> Do you think people work longer hours nowadays? <i>You:</i> Yes, definitely. Take my sister for example - she almost works herself to death .

IELTS SPEAKING TEST PART 1 – QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

In this section you will find a collection of questions of the kind you may be asked in Part 1 of your IELTS Speaking test. It is a good idea to go over as many as you can and answer them, or at least think of something to say. Wherever appropriate, extend your responses for around 10-20 seconds.

The first questions you may be asked

Are you a student or do you work?

- ⇒ What job do you do?
- ⇒ What are the most interesting parts of your job? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ How long are you hoping to stay in this job?
- ⇒ What's your dream job?

Where do you work?

- ⇒ Is your job sometimes boring? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Do you like your boss (your company)?
- ⇒ Would you recommend this job to others? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Is this kind of job popular in your country?

What course are you studying?

- ⇒ Which subject in your course do you enjoy most? (Why?)
- ⇒ What would you like to change on your course?
- ⇒ What will you do after you finish your course?

How long have you been on your course?

- ⇒ Which parts of your course have been the most difficult for you? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Have you made new friends on your course? (Why not?)
- ⇒ Would you recommend this course to others? (Why?/Why not?)

Other Part 1 topics

Let's talk about television now.

- ⇒ How often do you watch television?
- ⇒ What kind of programs do you enjoy watching?
- ⇒ Is television too powerful, do you think? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ In what ways is watching television bad for you?

Let's move on to talk about going on holiday/vacation now. Is that OK?

- ⇒ Where do people usually go for holidays/vacations in your country?
- ⇒ Where did you last go for a holiday/vacation?
- ⇒ Would you like longer holidays/vacations? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Is going on holiday/vacation sometimes stressful? (In what ways?)

I'd like to talk about getting up in the morning now.

- ⇒ What time do you usually get up in the morning?
- ⇒ Do you use an alarm clock? (When?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Do you like getting up early or not? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ What do you usually eat for breakfast? (Why?)

Now let's discuss the weather.

- ⇒ What's the weather like in your country at this time of year?
- ⇒ Do you like rainy days? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Do you ever sunbathe on sunny days? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Is the weather changing in your country? (How?)

Let's discuss storms now

- ⇒ Do you often have storms in your country?
- ⇒ Are you ever frightened of storms?
- ⇒ When was the last time you experienced a storm? (Where?)
- ⇒ Are storms dangerous?

I'd like to talk about supermarkets

- ⇒ Are there many supermarkets where you live? (Why not?)
- ⇒ What do you like about supermarkets?
- ⇒ Are supermarkets too powerful, do you think? (Why?)
- ⇒ Are traditional markets more interesting than supermarkets? (Why?/Why not?)

Let's talk about roads and traffic now.

- ⇒ Are roads busy where you live in your country? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Is it ever dangerous to cross roads where you live? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Are most drivers good drivers in your country? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ How can traffic on the roads be reduced?

Let's talk about learning to drive

- ⇒ Have you ever learnt to drive? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Is learning to drive expensive in your country? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ What is the lowest age a person should be able to drive? (Why?)
- ⇒ Is the driving test difficult in your country? (Why?/Why not?)

Let's talk about eating in restaurants now

- ⇒ How often do you eat out in a restaurant?
- ⇒ What is your favourite kind of restaurant? (Why?)
- ⇒ What kinds of restaurant are popular in your country?
- ⇒ Do you think restaurant food is too expensive? (Why?/Why not?)

I'd like to move on to talk about clothes now

- ⇒ Do you have many clothes in your wardrobe? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Which clothes in your wardrobe are your favourites? (Why?)
- ⇒ What do you do with your old clothes?
- ⇒ Are all new clothes cheap in your country?

Let's talk about sport now

- ⇒ Which sports are popular in your country?
- ⇒ Which sports have you tried? (When?)
- ⇒ Which sports are the most expensive to learn in your country? (Why?)
- ⇒ How often do you watch sport on television? (Why?/Why not?)

I'd like to discuss friends now

- ⇒ Do you have many friends or just a few?
- ⇒ Who is your best friend? (Why?)
- ⇒ Do you make friends easily? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Do you still have any friends from your elementary school? (Why not?)

I'd like to talk about using the phone now.

- ⇒ Do you enjoy talking on the phone? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Are you comfortable using the phone on a train or bus?
- ⇒ Have you ever lost a phone, or found a phone? (When?)
- ⇒ Are phones dangerous for children to have? (Why?/Why not?)

Let's move on to talk about eating meat now

- ⇒ How often do you eat meat? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Which kinds of meat are popular in your country?
- ⇒ Is eating meat good for you?
- ⇒ Will more people stop eating meat in the future? (Why?/Why not?)

Let's talk about walking now

- ⇒ How often do you go for a walk? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Where do you like to walk?
- ⇒ Have you ever walked a long distance? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Is walking better for your health than running?

Let's talk about cycling

- ⇒ When did you first try to ride a bicycle? (Why not?)
- ⇒ How safe is cycling in your country? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Is cycling popular in your country? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Would you enjoy a cycling holiday? (Why?/Why not?)

Let's talk about music

- ⇒ Is music from America popular in your country? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ When do you like listening to music?
- ⇒ Can you play a musical instrument? (Why not?/Which one?)
- ⇒ Which musical instrument would you like to learn to play? (Why?)

Let's talk about plane travel

- ⇒ Are you frightened of flying? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Is airline food good, do you think? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ What can you do on very long flights?
- ⇒ Is flying bad for your health? (Why not?/In what ways?)

Now let's talk about reading magazines

- ⇒ What kinds of magazine do you read?
- ⇒ Where do you most often read magazines?
- ⇒ Are magazines expensive in your country?
- ⇒ Which do you prefer - reading magazines or reading books? (Why?)

Let's talk about learning a language

- ⇒ How many languages have you tried to learn? (Which ones?)
- ⇒ Do you learn languages for work or for pleasure?
- ⇒ Is your own language difficult to learn, do you think? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Which language would you like to learn? (Why?)

Let's move on to talk about animals

- ⇒ Do you like animals? (Why?/Why not?)
- ⇒ Which is the most common wild animal in your country?
- ⇒ Have you ever seen one? (Where?)
- ⇒ Are any wild animals in your country dangerous?

Let's talk about noise

- ⇒ Is it noisy where you live?
- ⇒ Is noise a bad thing?
- ⇒ Do you like noise better than silence? (Why?)
- ⇒ When are **you** noisy?

I'd like to talk about cooking now

- ⇒ Who is the best cook in your family? (Why?)
- ⇒ What do you find difficult about cooking?
- ⇒ What meals can you cook best?
- ⇒ Why are cooking programs so popular on TV?

Let's talk about neighbours

- ⇒ Do your neighbours live close to you?
- ⇒ How often do you speak to your neighbours?
- ⇒ Do your neighbours ever help you? (How?)
- ⇒ Are you a good neighbour?

Let's talk about flowers now

- ⇒ Do you ever give flowers as a present? (When?)
- ⇒ Are there many flower shops in your country? (Where?)
- ⇒ Which colours of flower do you like best? (Why?)
- ⇒ Have you ever received flowers from someone? (Who?/Why not?)

Now, let's talk about colour

- ⇒ What colours do you often choose for your clothes? (Why?)
- ⇒ What is the best colour for a car? (Why?)
- ⇒ Are there some colours which are really popular in your country? (Which ones?)
- ⇒ Is there a colour that you don't like? (Why?)

IELTS SPEAKING TEST PARTS 2 AND 3 – QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

In this section you will find a collection of task cards and questions, similar to those your assessor may ask you in an IELTS test. Try talking on the task card topics (Part 2 of the interview) and answering the questions following each task card (Part 3 of the interview), as if you were in a real exam. Remember the time limits (one to two minutes per Part 2 task card talk and four minutes minimum for answering questions in Part 3).

Note: questions in Part 3 are ranked by approximate difficulty. When practicing, choose at least one question from each group. If you need a higher score in IELTS Speaking, select more B and C questions. Remember to practice building and developing your responses so that they are neither too basic nor too short.

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe a house you really like. You should say: where it is what it looks like who it belongs to and say why you like it so much</p> <p>Rounding off question: When are you planning to visit this house?</p>		1
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Tell me about the types of houses that are typical in your country. ⇒ Why are newer houses better than older houses? ⇒ Will apartments be the main form of accommodation in the future?	
	B harder	⇒ How easy is it for young people to buy their own house in your country? ⇒ Are the benefits of home ownership greater than those of renting? ⇒ Is owning a home a common dream in your society?	
	C hardest	⇒ What can governments do to help poor people to find accommodation? ⇒ Is it possible to design and build really cheap houses? ⇒ How could slums best be improved in large cities?	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe a person who you think is special. You should say: who the person is how you know the person what is special about the person and say why the person is so special to you</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do other people think this person is special?</p>		2
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Can you talk about a special person from the history of your country? ⇒ What statues in your home town or city celebrate the lives of special people? ⇒ Who is the most special person alive in the world today?	
	B harder	⇒ Are most celebrities really special, or just well known? ⇒ Is a person special because of what they do, or because of the kind of person they are? ⇒ Is it easier to be special in today's world of social networking on the Internet than it was in past times?	
	C hardest	⇒ What special goals does your government have for the future of your country? ⇒ How does your school system help students with special needs (disabled, deaf, for example)? ⇒ Is it better for children with special talents to go to special schools, or not?	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe the best day of your life. You should say: when it was who was with you what happened on that day and say why it was the best day of your life</p> <p>Rounding off question: Are most days good days for you?</p>		3
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Tell me about the best day in the year to be at home with family in your country. ⇒ Do you think you've already had your best days or are they still to come? ⇒ Are the best days of your life similar to those of your parents, do you think?	
	B harder	⇒ Are too many happy occasions in life becoming over-commercialised? ⇒ How could every day become the best day of your life? ⇒ How important is it to accept that life sometimes brings unhappiness?	
	C hardest	⇒ Should all governments have a Ministry of Happiness? ⇒ Is it a basic human right to expect one's life to keep getting better? ⇒ Are the best days of the Earth's life in the past, or in the future?	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe a place that you enjoy visiting. You should say: where the place is how often you go there what you do when you are there and say why you like it so much</p> <p>Rounding off question: When will you go there again?</p>		4
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Describe some really popular places in your country. ⇒ Is it getting more expensive to visit popular places or are they mainly free? ⇒ What kind of different places do younger and older people like to go to?	
	B harder	⇒ What makes a place a popular destination for visitors? ⇒ If a place becomes popular does it usually get spoilt? ⇒ How important is it for you to learn something new when you visit places?	
	C hardest	⇒ Is the global tourist industry likely to grow or contract in the current economic climate? ⇒ How does visiting places overseas contribute to better cross-cultural understanding? ⇒ Will people enjoy visiting other planets at some point in the future?	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe a singer, artist or actor you truly admire. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> who the person is what they look like what they have achieved professionally <p>and say why you admire them so much</p> <p>Rounding off question: Is this person still popular?</p>		5
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Describe someone in your country who everyone seems to like. ⇒ Is it easier to admire a singer or an artist, do you think? ⇒ Who most deserves your admiration – a famous person or a friend? 	
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ How do the mass media build up the reputations of singers and actors? ⇒ Is admiration a deep feeling or do most people just admire people who are popular? ⇒ Do you admire the same people as your parents do? 	
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ How do schools help young people to understand the qualities that deserve admiration? ⇒ Who most shapes your personal values – your school or your family? ⇒ How might admiration change in the future? Will we admire different sorts of people? 	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe the most unusual person in your family (not yourself!). You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> who the person is where they live what things they have done in their life <p>and say why you think they are unusual</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do people in your family think <u>you</u> are a little unusual?</p>		6
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ What kinds of students were considered unusual when you were at school? ⇒ Are you unusual in any way, or are you totally ordinary? ⇒ Is it easy or difficult to be a little unusual in your culture? 	
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Is being unusual helpful if you want to enter a career involving creativity? ⇒ If a person is unusual should they always be allowed just to be themselves? ⇒ How important is it for everyone to be tolerant of unusual people? 	
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Has globalisation created too much conformity through mass consumption of similar products? ⇒ Is a society that has too much conformity reducing its level of innovation? ⇒ Will the stronger societies in the future be those which strive for greater conformity or those which encourage individual difference? 	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe a time when you lost something important. You should say: what you lost how you lost it what happened afterwards and say how you felt and why</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you often lose things?</p>		7
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Tell me about something that you found once. ⇒ Do people in your country usually keep things that they find? ⇒ Are young people more careless with their things than their parents were?	
	B harder	⇒ Why are many parents losing the battle to control their children’s behaviour? ⇒ To what extent are school students losing respect for their teachers? ⇒ What social values are slowly being lost in your society?	
	C hardest	⇒ Has your government lost its vision of a great future for your country? ⇒ Is a globalised world causing the loss of national identity? ⇒ What should the world never lose?	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe an occasion when you had to wait a long time. You should say: where you were what happened how long you had to wait and say why you think it was such a long wait</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you get angry when you have to wait for a long time?</p>		8
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Where do you see queues most often in your country? ⇒ How acceptable is it to keep people waiting in your culture? ⇒ Are older people usually more impatient than younger people?	
	B harder	⇒ What goods or services involve long waiting times? (eg passports, flights, restaurants) ⇒ What is the best way to deal with a customer who has been waiting for a long time? ⇒ Have many modern businesses been able to reduce waiting times for customers?	
	C hardest	⇒ Is it reasonable for the world’s population to wait longer for real action on climate change? ⇒ Will it be necessary to wait for ever for world peace or is it coming soon? ⇒ How likely is it that the world will end?	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe a dream holiday you would like to take. You should say:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">where you would go who you would go with what you would do there</p> <p>and say why you think it would be so special</p> <p>Rounding off question: Would this holiday be expensive, do you think?</p>		9
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<p>⇒ Talk about some popular holiday destinations in your country.</p> <p>⇒ Do people in your country usually take long vacations or short ones?</p> <p>⇒ How expensive is it for people to travel abroad from your country?</p>	
	B harder	<p>⇒ What are the benefits of travelling on a group tour?</p> <p>⇒ Are adventure holidays likely to become more popular?</p> <p>⇒ How dangerous is it to plan your own travel and travel alone these days?</p>	
	C hardest	<p>⇒ How beneficial is tourism in your country?</p> <p>⇒ How could governments attract more tourists from overseas?</p> <p>⇒ Do you believe you will see outer space tourism in your lifetime?</p>	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe the friend you have known for the longest time. You should say:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">when you first met what you like about your friend how often you see your friend</p> <p>and say why this person is still your friend</p> <p>Rounding off question: Where is your friend now?</p>		10
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<p>⇒ Describe where people usually meet their main friends in your society.</p> <p>⇒ Is it important to have both men and women friends?</p> <p>⇒ Are friends usually from the same economic background?</p>	
	B harder	<p>⇒ How has the Internet changed the ways in which people meet their friends?</p> <p>⇒ Is making friends on the Internet dangerous?</p> <p>⇒ Is social networking on the Internet a good way to maintain friendships?</p>	
	C hardest	<p>⇒ Are friendships more superficial now than in the past?</p> <p>⇒ How possible is it to be a true friend of someone who comes from a different culture?</p> <p>⇒ What could governments do to prevent the problem of loneliness among the elderly?</p>	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe something you have kept from your childhood. You should say: what it is when you first had it where you keep it now and say why you have kept it</p> <p>Rounding off question: Would you ever give this _____ to someone?</p>		11
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Describe the sorts of toys that children have these days in your society. ⇒ How do people usually sell used things in your culture? ⇒ Do your parents still have things from their childhood?	
	B harder	⇒ How popular is recycling in your country? ⇒ What things does your local government recycle? ⇒ How could people be encouraged to recycle more often?	
	C hardest	⇒ How important is it for every nation to preserve things from its ancient history? ⇒ How could children be helped to be more interested in ancient history? ⇒ Will a nation's history be of less interest to future generations?	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe an interesting film you saw recently. You should say: what kind of film it was what the story was about who was in the film and say why you think it was interesting</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you go to the movies very often?</p>		12
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Describe the kinds of film that are popular in your country. ⇒ Are films from other countries more popular than local films? ⇒ How popular is cinema-going among young people?	
	B harder	⇒ Is it a good idea for the study of films to replace the study of literature in schools? ⇒ Is watching the film version of a book better than reading the book itself? ⇒ How important is it to make film versions of a nation's important stories?	
	C hardest	⇒ Is national censorship of films necessary, or should people be free to choose what to watch? ⇒ Do governments have a responsibility to provide money for the nation's film industry? ⇒ As more people in wealthy countries have 'home theatres' is the future of the cinema in doubt?	

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Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about a favourite toy from your childhood. You should say:</p> <p>what your favourite toy was who gave it to you when you got that toy and say why it was important to you</p> <p>Rounding off question: Where is the toy now?</p>	
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Describe traditional toys that are still popular in your country. ⇒ Do you agree that many children are given too many toys? ⇒ Did your parents have many toys when they were young?
	B harder	⇒ How important is it for toys to be educational? ⇒ Do you agree that the best toys are the ones you make yourself? ⇒ Which are more helpful to a child’s development – toys or games?
	C hardest	⇒ Do you agree that violent computer games should be banned? ⇒ Will simple toys still exist in the future or will all toys become virtual? ⇒ How important to successful socialisation are the toys a child has?

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Part 2 Task Card	<p>Describe a really nice restaurant you have been to. You should say:</p> <p>where it is what kind of food they serve what you had to eat there and say why you think it is so nice</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do your friends like this restaurant?</p>	
Part 3 Questions	A easy	⇒ Describe the kinds of restaurant that are popular in your country. ⇒ Is it getting more expensive to eat in a good quality restaurant? ⇒ How common is it for people to leave tips in restaurants in your country?
	B harder	⇒ How easy is it to get casual work in restaurants in your country? ⇒ Is being a restaurant waiter an easy job, do you think? ⇒ Are restaurants becoming more aware of the need to serve healthy, organic food?
	C hardest	⇒ Are international fast food restaurants damaging appreciation of a country’s traditional food? ⇒ How useful is it to know about different types of food from other countries? ⇒ Is it likely that local speciality foods will not survive in a globalised future?

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about some recent changes in your hometown. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what the changes are who wanted the changes which people they are affecting <p>and say how you feel about the changes</p> <p>Rounding off question: Is your town changing too fast, do you think?</p>		15
	Part 3 Questions	<p>A easy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Describe some of the new buildings in your home town or city. ⇒ To what extent is your town or city preserving its history? ⇒ How serious are the social problems in your town or city? <p>B harder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Is change in cities and towns generally positive or not? ⇒ What social principles should govern changes in towns or cities? ⇒ What part should citizens take in choosing changes to their town or city? <p>C hardest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Who benefits most when cities or towns change rapidly? ⇒ How could international organizations have more influence on global changes? ⇒ Is the world changing for the better overall? 	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about how you spent last weekend. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where you spent the weekend who you spent the weekend with what you did <p>and say why you liked/disliked spending your weekend in this way</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you go away at weekends sometimes?</p>		16
	Part 3 Questions	<p>A easy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Describe a typical weekend for most people in your country. ⇒ Is the weekend in your country very different from weekdays? ⇒ How important is it to have some time to rest at the weekend. <p>B harder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Why are many people’s lives becoming busier? ⇒ Are people in danger of suffering from high levels of stress by trying to do too much? ⇒ How likely is it that stress levels will increase in the future? <p>C hardest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Should governments try to impose legal limits on the number of hours worked each week? ⇒ Is having at least one free day per week an international human right? ⇒ Which is more likely – the disappearance of the weekend, or the disappearance of retirement? 	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about an older person that you know. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> who the person is how you know them what you like about the person <p>and explain why this person is important to you</p> <p>Rounding off question: When did you last see _____?</p>		17
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Describe how most old people are cared for in your country. ⇒ Are the elderly still respected in your society? ⇒ To what extent are the elderly in danger of becoming the forgotten age group? 	
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ What is the most appropriate age for retirement in your society? ⇒ Is it better to retire early or work for as long as you can? ⇒ Will most people be able to afford to retire in the future? 	
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ What measures could your government take to support the elderly more effectively? ⇒ Do you think governments should provide pensions for all old people? ⇒ Should governments make families legally responsible for total care of their older members? 	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about a message you received. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what was in the message who sent it how the message was delivered to you <p>and what happened after you received the message</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you send many text messages?</p>		18
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Describe how most people send messages to each other in your society. ⇒ Are most text messages really necessary? ⇒ When are handwritten messages still used? 	
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ At what age should children start to learn to write? ⇒ Could schools teach handwriting more effectively? ⇒ Is it still important to be able to write by hand neatly? 	
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Is the Internet providing too much written information but too little understanding of our world? ⇒ Do you agree or disagree that an 'open encyclopaedia' like Wikipedia is a good idea? ⇒ What kinds of information will be most important in the future? 	

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Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about your favourite book. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what its title is what it's about when you read it <p>and say why it is your favourite book</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you read very often?</p>	
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Talk about the types of bookshops that you have in your country. ⇒ Do you read as many books as your parents? ⇒ How important is reading in your life?
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Why are electronic books starting to become more popular? ⇒ Do you agree that electronic books are not as satisfying to read as conventional books? ⇒ Will electronic books totally replace standard books in the future?
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Is it important to stop books from being illegally copied and sold in other countries? ⇒ Do you agree that all books should be available free on the Internet? ⇒ Is writing and publishing your own books (self-publishing) a positive thing to do?

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Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about a way you like to relax. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how you like to relax where you go to relax who goes with you <p>and say why this is how you like to relax</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you get enough time to relax?</p>	
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ What do people usually do to relax in your country? ⇒ Is relaxation considered essential in your culture, or a kind of laziness? ⇒ Are you better at relaxing than your parents are?
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Do you agree that companies should encourage their employees to relax? ⇒ How could companies reduce the stress levels of their workers? ⇒ Which is the more effective worker – a relaxed worker or a focused worker?
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Does the medical profession have an effective way of treating anxiety? ⇒ Will the increasing pace of life prevent effective relaxation in the future? ⇒ What could schools do to teach children effective relaxation techniques?

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about something that you made yourself. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what it is when you made it how you made it <p>and say why you made this particular item</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you make things very often?</p>	
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Talk about things that children in your society often make at school? ⇒ Do families in your society still teach children how to make things? ⇒ Do older people usually know how to make more things than younger people do?
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ How important is it for schools to encourage creativity? ⇒ Are children born creative or do they learn how to be creative? ⇒ How can parents help their children to develop their creativity?
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Do you agree that many countries are no longer manufacturing as many innovative things? ⇒ How important is it for a country to have a strong manufacturing sector? ⇒ How will manufacturing change in the future, do you think?

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about a school you went to as a child. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what school it was where the school was located what you remember about the school <p>and say what you enjoyed about your school days there</p> <p>Rounding off question: Would you send your child to the same school?</p>	
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Describe the different types of school most children attend in your society. ⇒ Are children staying at school longer now than in your parents' time? ⇒ How expensive is it to attend a government school?
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Do you agree that single sex schools are more effective than mixed sex schools? ⇒ Is home education better for a child than attending a large government school? ⇒ How important is the teacher for successful learning?
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ What is a suitable class size for effective learning at elementary school? ⇒ Will teachers be unnecessary in the future if computers can offer more and more, self-learning materials? ⇒ Is the main function of a school to educate, or to train students to conform?

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about an advertisement you have heard or seen recently. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what the advertisement was for where you saw or heard it what products or services were in the advertisement <p>and say why you remember the advertisement</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do advertisements annoy you?</p>		23
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Describe the kinds of products that are advertised on TV in your country. ⇒ Do you agree that advertisements in your country are often interesting? ⇒ Is TV advertising more effective than magazine advertising in your culture? 	
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Should children be used in advertisements to sell things? ⇒ Do you agree that advertising has a powerful influence on children? ⇒ Is it acceptable to try to sell adult clothes or make up to children when they are still very young? 	
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ How important is it to develop international standards to control unfair advertising? ⇒ To what extent is advertising an invasion of personal privacy? ⇒ How will advertising change in the future, do you think? 	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about an enjoyable event that you attended. You should say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what kind of event it was when and where you attended it what you did at the event <p>and say why you enjoyed the event</p> <p>Rounding off question: Do you go to important events very often?</p>		24
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ What are the major events each year in your city or town? ⇒ Do you enjoy attending music or other big events? ⇒ Are there more events now than when your parents were your age? 	
	B harder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Should citizens be free to demonstrate in public any time? ⇒ Do you agree that protesting in the street is an important human right? ⇒ To what extent are people losing interest in street protests? 	
	C hardest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Is it a good idea for governments to try organising more national events each year? ⇒ Do you agree that national events help people to feel they belong to their country? ⇒ In the future will most national events be replaced by international events? 	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about a garden that you like. You should say:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">where it is</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">how often you go there</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">with whom you go</p> <p>and say why you like this garden</p> <p>Rounding off question: Did you like gardens when you were a child?</p>		25
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<p>⇒ Describe the nicest parks in your town or city</p> <p>⇒ Is gardening a popular leisure activity in your culture?</p> <p>⇒ Do you agree that gardens are important?</p>	
	B harder	<p>⇒ What is the best climate for a healthy garden?</p> <p>⇒ Will there be enough water for people and for gardens in the future?</p> <p>⇒ Do you agree or disagree that the best gardens are wild, not planned?</p>	
	C hardest	<p>⇒ Should governments turn city parks into land for new houses?</p> <p>⇒ How can young people be taught to be interested in gardening?</p> <p>⇒ Do you agree or disagree that gardens should be organic and free of chemicals?</p>	

Part 2 Task Card	<p>Talk about your favourite shop. You should say:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">what shop it is</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">what it sells</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">how you came to know about this shop</p> <p>and say why you like this shop</p> <p>Rounding off question: What was the last thing you bought from this shop?</p>		26
Part 3 Questions	A easy	<p>⇒ Talk about some shops in your town or city that you don't like.</p> <p>⇒ How often did you help your mother with the shopping when you were younger?</p> <p>⇒ Why do many men in families not like shopping?</p>	
	B harder	<p>⇒ Do you agree that shops no longer offer much personal service?</p> <p>⇒ How important is it for a shop assistant to be friendly?</p> <p>⇒ Which is better – a supermarket that sells everything or a little corner shop with a lovely owner?</p>	
	C hardest	<p>⇒ How could governments encourage internet shopping, in order to save energy?</p> <p>⇒ Will internet shopping replace department stores eventually?</p> <p>⇒ Do you agree that internet shopping could lead to shopping addiction?</p>	



IELTS TEST

FULL IELTS PRACTICE TEST – GENERAL TRAINING

LISTENING TEST

Test Instructions



Listen to the recording straight through, **ONCE** only (total audio time: 30 min). Answer the questions while listening to each section. At the end of the test you will have another ten minutes to transfer your answers to the Answer sheet (page 337). Before starting the test, **download and print the Listening and Reading questions** from this webpage: <http://www.ielts-blog.com/isf-downloads/>

SECTION 1

Questions 1-10

Questions 1-5

Complete the Seafront Backpacker hostel enquiry form.

Write **NO MORE THAN 2 WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

Seafront Backpacker Hostel *Bay View Heights*



Guest Form

Guest's Current Address: Seaview Hotel **EXAMPLE** 15 Esplanade, Dune Beach

Family Name of guest **1** _____ First Name **2** _____

Phone No. **3** _____ No of nights required **4** _____

Cost per night: Dormitory **A:** \$18 **B:** \$15 Weekly Cost (7 nights) **5** \$_____

Questions 6-10

Choose the correct letter **A**, **B** or **C**.

- 6 Each bathroom at the hostel has...**
A no shower but hot water all the time
B a shower, and hot water sometimes
C a shower and hot water all the time
- 7 Which facilities are free?**
A Breakfast and car parking
B Breakfast and internet
C Towels and bike parking
- 8 She recommends the road from Dune Beach to Selby because...**
A it's near the hotel
B it's not busy
C it's safer for cycling
- 9 The hostel is located:**
A in a retirement home on the beach
B up a hill on the sea front
C along a right turn off Beach Road
- 10 Which animal is known to be a problem to the caller?**
A fox
B dog
C cat

SECTION 2 Questions 11-20

Complete the notes below.

Use **ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

Name of machine	Positive (+) features	Negative (-) features	Overall Assessment
Coffee Supreme	can brew 4+ cups of mild/strong coffee water filtration system 11 _____ the taste overflow protection/drip stop parts easy to 12 _____	no auto grinder 13 _____ watt electrical system	good value for money but 14 _____ performance
Café Delight	combines a 15 _____ coffee maker with an espresso machine steam nozzle + frothing attachment	machine is 16 _____ and large	flexible and 17 _____
Coffeetime Automatic	can make different 18 _____ has electronic disc to calculate water needs automatically auto clean/descale	19 _____ and too large	bulky but uses current 20 _____ well

SECTION 3 Questions 21-30**Question 21**

Choose **TWO** correct letters from **A, B, C** or **D**.

21 Which TWO are purposes of the Student Support Service?

- A** to improve students' independence
- B** to carry out some of the study for the students
- C** to encourage students to make judgments
- D** to help students to build relationships

Questions 22 - 26

Answers the questions below about Wilson's study problems.

Write **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

- What is Wilson's main problem? **22** _____
- What part of an assignment is often not clear to him? **23** _____
- With which aspect of his essay problems will the special session help? **24** _____
- What is one of Wilson's other problems with essay writing? **25** _____
- With whom can Wilson talk about the drafts of his essays? **26** _____

Questions 27-30

Complete the Report on Grace's problems.

Write **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

REPORT

Grace has difficulty keeping up with 27 _____ on her Nursing Course.

She says that lecturers speak too quickly and are not always 28 _____.

She thinks that the recording of lectures 29 _____ time.

Grace is not sleeping well; seems worried about her family.

I suggested that she should talk to a counsellor from a different cultural 30 _____.

I offered to help her to make the appointment.

SECTION 4 Questions 31-40

Choose the correct letter **A**, **B** or **C** according to what the lecturer says:

31 Management research now understands that...

- A organisations need a structure
- B feelings affect relationships significantly
- C workplace relationships can only be effective with rules

32 Emotional intelligence is...

- A an aspect of IQ
- B a range of abilities linked to feelings
- C an important management task

33 Empathy essentially involves...

- A imagining another's feelings
- B understanding certain conditions
- C feeling natural enough

34 Managing other people's feelings is helpful to...

- A self motivation
- B popularity of the organisation
- C leadership skills

35 In a happy workplace, people are...

- A intelligent and technically competent
- B cooperative and respectful
- C aware of the importance of quality

Complete the sentences below.

Write **ONE WORD ONLY** from the lecture for each answer.

A manager with a healthy self image will probably be a 36 _____ influence in workplaces.

Our perceived self is our inner 37 _____ of ourselves.

Our desired self focuses on what is 38 _____ within ourselves.

Our presented selves require us to behave according to what is 39 _____ by others.

The three aspects of the self are not performed individually, but 40 _____.

Practice Listening Test Answer Sheet

1		21	
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17		37	
18		38	
19		39	
20		40	

READING TEST

Test Instructions

You have **ONE HOUR** to answer 40 questions in three sections. You must transfer your answers to the Answer sheet (page 350) during this time. Allow approximately 20 minutes for each section.

SECTION 1 Questions 1-14

Read the information below and answer **Questions 1-7**

Water-wise rebates

This government scheme encourages homeowners to use water more wisely. You can now receive generous rebates if you buy any of these water-saving products for your home:



Water-efficient showerhead

Everyone takes showers, but some showerheads are much better at regulating the flow of water, and this can build up considerable water savings. If you purchase a low-flow showerhead with a rating of 3 stars or more, you can claim up to **\$30**

Dual-flush toilet

Dual-flush toilets enable you to make considerable savings in water use. If you replace your current single flush system with a dual-flush toilet suite with a star rating of 3 stars or more, you are eligible for a rebate of **\$150**

Water-efficient garden goods

Certain types of mulch or soil improver products help to improve the water retention qualities of your soil and this reduces the amount of watering that you need to do on hot, dry summer days. If you buy water efficient garden goods, you are eligible for a rebate of up to **\$200**

Rainwater tanks

Rainwater tanks help you to build up a secondary store of water for your garden, or even for your home in an emergency. If you buy and fit a plumbed-in rainwater tank (connected to your house) of a minimum of 3000 litres capacity you are eligible for rebates of between **\$200** and **\$1000**

For full terms and conditions and how to apply, phone 1800 888 900

Questions 1-7

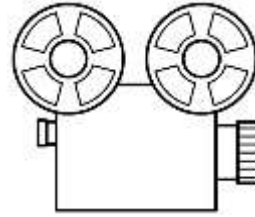
Answer the questions below using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 1-7 on your answer sheet.

- 1 Who is offering the water-wise rebates?
- 2 What are water-wise shower heads better at controlling?
- 3 How much cash can you receive for having a dual-flush suite fitted?
- 4 With what aspect of water efficiency do some kinds of garden goods help the soil?
- 5 What type of rainwater tank is eligible for a rebate?
- 6 What is the minimum capacity of a water tank needed to claim the rebate?
- 7 If you phone the number given you will receive details of how to make a claim, a complete explanation of what is being offered, and what else?

The City Film Festival

presents a wonderful feast of movie magic!



A

A comedy in which a policeman, desperate to impress his inspector of police, helps a thief to steal a police car, and then chases the thief in the London rush hour using only his bicycle.

B

A slightly dark movie. A lonely university professor slowly goes crazy because he can't get the robot in his laboratory to talk, only to sing! Murder is in the air.....but who is the victim?

C

If you like Indian style music you'll like this new film set in India with plenty of beautiful colour and local atmosphere. Boy meets girl, they fall in love, but there are always problems....this time it's his wish to help a poor servant girl.

D

Plenty of fun in this movie about students who persuade their unusual professor to become the singer in their pop group, only to find that he loses his voice just before their big, live concert.

E

A non-stop action film about an escaped prisoner who has to catch the real criminal before the police recapture the prisoner and put him back in prison for life.

F

An Indian girl in Paris falls in love with her piano teacher but then finds out that he is very sick. They write a piano concerto together, and a miracle becomes possible.

G

In this film about family life, twins who were so happy together as children, start to hate each other as adults. But why?

H

A sad movie about a loving family that moves to start a new life in Canada, but can't seem to be happy there because each member of the family sees the new life so differently.

Questions 8-14

The list of films has 8 descriptions **A-H**. Choose the correct title for each film from the list of titles below.

Write the correct number, **i-viii**, in boxes 8-14 on your answer sheet.

List of film titles

- i** Who made the happy smiles of childhood into enemies?
- ii** The many voices of our lost happiness
- iii** Two-wheeled hunter!
- iv** Singing madness
- v** Music of love
- vi** Indian love triangle
- vii** Sing Professor Cool!
- viii** Two to chase – only one truth to find

EXAMPLE	ANSWER
FILM A	__ iii __

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------|
| 8 | FILM B | _____ |
| 9 | FILM C | _____ |
| 10 | FILM D | _____ |
| 11 | FILM E | _____ |
| 12 | FILM F | _____ |
| 13 | FILM G | _____ |
| 14 | FILM H | _____ |

SECTION 2**Questions 15-27**

Read the information below and answer **Questions 15-20**

Grangers Store - Employment application form

Position: *Customer service*

Applicant information

Name: *Rosa Cabrera*

Address: *1/16 Digby Street, Huntsdown, HU2 3DW*

Phone: *0730 2145 9835*

Age (if under 21): *20*

Referral? *Central Internet Employment Service*

Educational background**High School**

School name/address: *Coughton High School, East Street, Grandville GR2 5TN*

Did you graduate? *Yes*

Qualification: *Year 11 Certificate*

College

School name/address: *Broughton College of Vocational Education, City Street, Garburgh GA3 7CN*

Did you graduate? *Not yet*

Qualification: *Diploma in Retail Service Skills, partly completed*

Applicant availability

What days and hours are you available for work?

Monday to Wednesday (09:00-18:00)

How many hours per week can you work? *25*

If hired, would you have transportation? *Yes, I have a car*

Please answer these questions

Why are you applying to work here?

I use your store and am always impressed by the quality of service.

What has been your greatest accomplishment?

I won a regional swimming championship while at school.

Why do customers shop at this store?

Because it offers quality products at an affordable price, with high service standards.

What is customer service?

It means using a range of interpersonal skills to provide customers with reliable and truthful information, make them feel valued and offer any after-sales support.

A customer complains that the coffee tastes terrible, what would you do?

I would ask the customer to explain why, listen, then apologise and ask if the customer would like another cup of coffee, or an alternative beverage.

What would you do if your replacement didn't arrive after your shift finished?

I would check with my supervisor and work late until a replacement could be found.

A co-worker is rude to customers, what would you do?

I would talk to my co-worker and find out if something is troubling her at work or in their home life. If not, I would suggest that they ask about additional training in customer service.

Questions 15-20

Complete each sentence. Use **ONE WORD** from the text for each answer.

- 15 Rosa has only _____ finished her customer service qualification.
- 16 Rosa's weekly _____ for work is limited to 3 days and 25 hours.
- 17 Her greatest non-work achievement was to win a _____ competition.
- 18 Supporting customers and being truthful are examples of Rosa's view of the meaning of customer _____.
- 19 If a customer complains about the coffee but doesn't want another one, offering an _____ drink is a good option.
- 20 If a co-worker is not being effective Rosa thinks it might be due to something going wrong at _____ or in the workplace.

Environmental Awareness Centre

Staff Induction Policy

Induction is the process of introducing a new employee to their new job and workplace. A good induction process is beneficial both to the new employee and the organisation. It helps new employees understand expectations, identify training needs, and assimilate into the new work environment. It boosts confidence and enables employees to work effectively.



Stages of Induction

Before starting work

Induction begins when the new employee has been offered and has accepted the post. A start date is then agreed. Before starting their job the new employee should be told the following:

- The time and place to arrive on their first day.
- Transport arrangements such as public transport, parking facilities etc.
- Who will meet them.
- Who their line manager will be.

Understanding the work environment

The new employee needs information about practical issues such as:

- Where they will be working
- Company building(s)
- Lunch and coffee breaks
- Time recording procedure
- Introduction to line manager and colleagues

During the first week, the new employee should be introduced to the phone and computer systems, email, alarms, opening up and closing procedures. All new employees undertake specific training in health and safety, and equal opportunities.

Job Instruction

This stage involves induction into the requirements of the new role. The job description is explored with the line manager, work tasks prioritized, and targets set. Any immediate training needs will be identified. Meetings will be arranged for the new employee to meet key staff.

The Organisation

Induction involves providing information about the organisational structure, its aims and objectives. Responsibility for designing the induction lies with the line manager. An induction should be employee-centred, flexible and interesting, with employee input to the plan. The line manager and new employee should meet on a regular basis during induction to assess how they are settling in, to evaluate progress, and identify any required actions.

Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the induction process to inform the induction plans for future employees. This should include both the employee and relevant staff.

Questions 21-27

Do the following statements agree with the information in the text?

In boxes 21-27 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE	if the statement contradicts the information
NOT GIVEN	if there is no information on this

- 21 Induction helps employees to fit into and accept their new workplace.
- 22 Before the new person starts, the company should tell them how to get to and from work.
- 23 Most new workers need to be given general training in health and safety issues.
- 24 New workers will discuss their job in detail with a senior person above them.
- 25 The new employee will meet security personnel.
- 26 New workers should have a chance to help with induction design.
- 27 Assessing the usefulness of induction should involve staff connected to the new employee's work.

SECTION 3**Questions 28-40**

Gender differences in human attraction

**Section A**

'Boy meets girl' is an age-old ritual in the human species, but scientists have for many years been trying to uncover the basis of human attraction. In simple terms, what is it that draws a man or woman to be attracted to someone of the opposite sex?

Section B

One of the most basic elements of attraction is the degree of symmetry that is perceived in the other person. Scientists have been scanning faces and bodies into computers for many years to determine symmetry ratios. Both men and women tend to rate symmetrical members of the opposite sex as more attractive and in better health than their less symmetrical counterparts. It has also been found that men with higher degrees of symmetry tend to have more partners than men of lower symmetry. Women, however, are more complex in terms of partner choice; besides symmetry, the behaviour of a potential partner who is competing for their attention is important for them.

Section C

There are gender differences in other aspects of attraction as well. Men tend to be more interested in women who are youthful and physically attractive, even if what men find physically attractive varies from culture to culture. For example, some cultures value female fatness when courting women. Studies of the socioecological factors that determine attitudes toward fatness in women suggest that important factors include food security, type of climate, the degree of value placed on female work, and the relative social dominance of women. Countries like the USA have become obsessed with a slim physique. Women have come to associate curvaceousness with incompetence. More classically "feminine" bodied women may have been considered less professional than men; consequently, those women now exhibit eating disorders. In other words, these eating disorders are not simply instances of psychopathology in women, but rather a manifestation of a societal bias against women. This bias has decreased enough to encourage women to strive in education and different professions, but has not decreased enough to eliminate the supposed association between femininity and incompetence.

Section D

Several factors seem to underpin the thin standard of bodily attractiveness for women in countries like the USA. The first is that women wishing to appear professional and intelligent believe they must be thin due to society's demands. Also, women who feel that their fathers do not consider them to be intelligent seem to have a tendency to want a slimmer body than those women who do not carry such feelings of parental disapproval. The derivation of most eating disorders is this slim body ideal. It seems that women change their ideals (towards being thinner) before men change their ideal of a woman's shape, and it further appears that the women's changes are greater in magnitude. This implies that women may determine the standard. This slim standard is associated with occupational success; however, it is not consistent with men's preferences. Relative to men, women are more cognitively and behaviourally invested in their appearance. This is a natural result due to the high importance men place on physical attractiveness of their mate. If women start to focus as much as men do on the physical features of their mates, then men may also become subject to this preoccupation with body and appearance. The recent increase in the number and sales of male cosmetic products may be an early hint that this is already happening.

Section E

Men's ideal for their own physique tends to be 'bigger equals better'. There is evidence to show that more men want to gain weight rather than lose weight. The use of steroids and excessive weight lifting can accomplish this goal of a larger body. Women, however, tend to find men of average size to be the most attractive. Women seem to prefer men with moderately broad shoulders who are of medium height and have a chest slightly larger than average, but not as large and powerful as a traditional body builder's chest.

Section F

Facial features that portray dominance are commonly thought of as being more attractive to women. These features include thick eyebrows, small eyes, thin lips and a square jaw. But, contrary to the "dominance" features, research seems to suggest that women are in fact most attracted by an optimal combination of 'neoteneous', mature, and expressive facial features, in addition to grooming attributes. Neoteneous features include large eyes, a small nose and full lips. A mature face is defined as having prominent cheek bones and a large chin.

Section G

It is evident that a clear gender gap exists with respect to physical attractiveness preferences. Women desire average size men, while wanting a smaller, thinner physique for themselves. Men, on the other hand, want larger than average bodies for themselves and prefer their female mates to be a bit larger than women would actually like to be. With these differences in preferences, it is no wonder that finding one's ideal mate can be so difficult!

Questions 28-34

The text has 7 sections A-G. Which section mentions the following?

Write the correct letter, **A-G**, in boxes 28-34 on your answer sheet.

- 28 Both women and men are attracted by evenness of body and facial features.
- 29 The relationship between being liked by a parent and the desire for an attractive body.
- 30 Different cultures produce significantly different social perceptions of body shape.
- 31 Women and men have differing views of a male's ideal size.
- 32 Attitudes to a woman's size and weight can be linked to the weather.
- 33 Typical beliefs about female preferences in male faces are not supported by evidence.
- 34 Women and men apparently want different features in themselves from those that are most desired by the opposite sex.

Questions 35-40

Do the following statements reflect the opinion of the writer?

In the boxes 35-40 on your answer sheet write

YES	if the statement reflects the opinion of the writer
NO	if the statement contradicts the opinion of the writer
NOT GIVEN	if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

- 35 Women are interested in what men do as well as in balanced facial and body features.
- 36 There is universal agreement about male perceptions of female attractiveness.
- 37 Women who aren't thin are less intelligent than men who are overweight.
- 38 It's possible that men may become as concerned with their bodies as women appear to be.
- 39 Women prefer a man's face to show maturity rather than dominance.
- 40 Stated perceptions of physical attraction show the clear influence of a generation gap.

Practice Reading Test Answer Sheet

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20		40	

WRITING TEST

TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You have decided to leave your job and need to inform your company about your decision.

Write a letter to your manager. In the letter,

explain why you are leaving

express your thanks for what you learned at the company

suggest the sort of person who could replace you

Write at least 150 words.

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

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,

TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

In many countries people dream of owning their own home instead of paying rent. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of home ownership.

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

SPEAKING TEST



Now listen to the recording of Practice Interview 2 (Questions)

Listen to the recording and practice answering as if you were in a real IELTS interview (total audio time: 11 min).

1. Listen to the **Introduction** and **Part 1** and respond to each question.
2. After the **introduction to Part 2**, **pause** the recording for one minute to make notes on the task for your short talk. (* The task card is below)
3. After the one minute, **start** the recording again. After you hear, 'Could you start talking now, please', **pause** the recording again and start talking for a minimum of one and a maximum of two minutes.
4. **Start** the recording again after two minutes maximum, listen to and answer the rounding off question. Then just **continue** as the interview moves into **Part 3**.

Remember, Part 3 should last for a minimum of four minutes, so just pause the recording if the next question starts before you have finished answering the previous one.

Here is the Task Card for Part 2 of the Interview.

Talk about your favourite movie star.

You should say:

who your favourite movie star is
 what kinds of movies they have appeared in
 what sort of person you think they are in real life

and say why you like this movie star so much

ANSWERS & TRANSCRIPTS

Listening Fitness Activities – Answer Sheet

Fitness Activity 1	Fitness Activity 6
1. A	1. 533 East 67th St
2. A	2. 93014269
3. V	Fitness Activity 7
4. V	1. Thursday(s)
5. C	2. 8 / eight
6. C	3. ATSTIX
Fitness Activity 2	Fitness Activity 8
1. C	1. B/bookshop
2. B	2. morning(s)
3. A	3. M/music
Fitness Activity 3	4. B/beauty
1. admission	5. Thursday
2. select	Fitness Activity 9
3. middle	1. adopted
4. design	2. habit
5. distributed	3. efficiency
Fitness Activity 4	Fitness Activity 10
1. jams	1. how long
2. inefficiency (built-in)	2. (brief) notes
3. (the) left	3. eye contact
4. (It) improved / an improvement	4. speaking slowly
Fitness Activity 5	5. P/project
1. 372	Total: 40 answers
2. 11:30	
3. bag	
4. Singapore	



Note:

1. '/' means alternative answer
2. '(') means optional part of the answer

Reading Fitness Activities – Answer Sheet

Fitness Activity 1	Fitness Activity 8
1. vi	1. I
2. iii	2. A
3. viii	3. P
4. vii	Fitness Activity 9
5. i	1. FALSE
Fitness Activity 2	2. TRUE
1. A	3. TRUE
2. C	4. NOT GIVEN
3. D	5. TRUE
Fitness Activity 3	6. TRUE
1. electricity	7. TRUE
2. moved	8. FALSE
3. flood	Fitness Activity 10
4. science	1. D
5. consumer	2. G
Fitness Activity 4	3. B
1. C	4. H
2. B	Fitness Activity 11
3. D	1. devastated
4. A	2. support
Fitness Activity 5	3. solution
1. YES	4. 150,000ML/water
2. YES	Fitness Activity 12
3. NOT GIVEN	1. retail
4. NO	2. 45K
Fitness Activity 6	3. sales
1. C	4. next week
2. B	5. Microsoft Word/Excel
3. E	Fitness Activity 13
4. E	1. stability
5. D	2. evaporator
Fitness Activity 7	3. particles
1. \$2.5 billion	4. pale tan
2. flooding/flooding in Gympie	5. vitamin D
3. higher gates/floodgates/higher floodgates	
4. water crisis	



Note:

1. The actual IELTS Reading test has only 40 questions numbered 1-40.
2. '/' means alternative answer.

Writing Task 1 Fitness Activities – Answer Sheet

Letter Type 1 (informal)		
1.	c	Planning the letter
2.	a	
3.	a	
4.	Present continuous (progressive) - How is it going? / Present perfect - I've just booked / Future continuous - I'll be studying / Present simple – I'm ... excited	Writing Paragraph 1
5.	c	
6.	b	
7.	a) look after b) As you know c) a bit d) apartment e) while f) with	Writing Paragraph 2
8.	'it' instead of 'that' 'haven't' instead of 'hadn't' 'bedrooms and a balcony'/'bedrooms and balconies' instead of 'bedroom and balcony'	
9.	5 (looking after the cat is really one task - i.e. feeding it and letting it out)	Writing Paragraph 3
10.	Line 1 'have to' Line 2 'require' Line 3 'require' Line 4 'have to'	
11.	b	
12.	'pretty' instead of 'quite' 'loads of' instead of 'many' 'pick up' instead of 'collect' 'thing' instead of 'task'	
13.	1 b 2 a	Writing the letter's Ending
14.	a c	

Letter Type 2 (formal)		Planning the letter
1.	a	
2.	b	
3.	b	Writing Paragraph 1
4.	b	
5.	a) support b) undertake c) amplify	
6.	b	
7.	a d	Writing Paragraph 2
8.	c d	
9.	b e g	
10.	writer uses 'possess' instead of 'have' 'carry out' instead of 'do' 'renovate' instead of 'do up' 'experienced at' instead of 'good at' 'proficient' instead of 'good'	Writing Paragraph 3
11.	1. useful 2. experienced 3. proficient	
12.	1. For instance 2. also 3. Furthermore	
13.	I am available this month <u>on</u> Friday 12th <u>in</u> the morning <u>at</u> 10 o'clock, but <u>in</u> April I'll be overseas. I think I last saw you <u>in</u> 2011.	Writing Paragraph 4
14.	Because he wants to indicate that he is available regularly, not just for those days in one week only.	
15.	b	Writing the letter's Ending
16.	c	

Letter Type 3 (semi-formal)		Planning the letter
1.	a c	Writing Paragraph 1
2.	b	
3.	a	Writing Paragraph 2
4.	'I'm sorry to be' / 'you may not realise' / 'Unfortunately,'	
5.	b	
6.	really / properly / recently / effectively a	Writing Paragraph 3
7.	'soundly' could replace 'properly' 'extremely' could replace 'really' 'lately' could replace 'recently' 'fully' could replace 'effectively'	
8.	a	
9.	1 I would like to suggest that you keep your dog inside the house 2 Please keep your dog inside the house 3 You must keep your dog in the house 4 Keep your dog inside the house, OK!	Writing the letter's Ending
10.	b d	
11.	(Example) Eat fewer biscuits so that you don't put on weight. (Example) You should study hard so that you pass your exams.	
12.	a	
13.	b c	

Writing Task 2 Fitness Activities – Answer Sheet

Task Type 1: Indicate and support your level of agreement		
1. a (but it is often the case that a writer is not 100% in agreement with a statement)		Planning your answer
2. c		
3. b (but 4 possible if short of time)		
4. c		
5. a (time pressure encourages brevity)		
6. c		Writing the Introduction
7. a, d		
8. a) Shopping is likely to grow in popularity. b) Shopping is not likely to die out. c) Overspending is likely to cause problems. d) It is highly unlikely that shopping will ever bring happiness.		
9. people (consumers); selfish (self-centred); careless (less disciplined)		
10. a) Shopping makes consumers selfish. b) Shopping makes consumers dangerous. c) Shopping makes consumers spend unwisely. d) Shopping makes consumers ill-disciplined.		
11. c		Writing Body Para 1
12. a) ...enable them to pay their bills b) ...are available to help...		
13. c		Writing Body Paragraph 2
14. Examples: a)...higher education is important b)...travelling has become so popular c)...people work so hard d) Love (<i>You need to believe this!</i>)		
15. show (depict); wish (desire); look (appearance); shoppers (consumers); feeling good (wellbeing); not good enough (inadequate); goods (products); social good (community welfare)		
16. a, b		
17. a), b) Your choice! c) more d) more		Writing Body Paragraph 3
18. d		
19. c		
20. b		
21. a) + b) – c) + d) –		
22. a		Writing the Conclusion
23. all too tempting; ever-busier working lives a) all too / far too all too / far too b) ever-growing c) ever-busier d) never-ending		
24. b, c, e		

Task Type 2: Present a two-sided Discussion		
1. c		Planning your answer
2. b		
3. b		
4. a		
5. b		
6. a		Writing the Introduction
7. a) economic uncertainties b) pure romance is under challenge		
8. a) problem b) issue c) topic d) problems / issues		
9. b, d, e		Writing Body Paragraph 1
10. a) + iii) b) + iv) c) + ii) d) + i)		
11. Your choice, so answers will vary		
12. a) often seem b) often seem c) often seem to struggle d) often seems to know		
13. Your choices, so answers will vary		Writing Body Paragraph 2
14. a) wedding cake b) marriage ceremony c) marriage partner d) job opportunity		
15. a (1), c (2), d (3), b (4)		
16. a, c		Writing Body Paragraph 3
17. a) commitment / infatuation b) reputation / proximity c) nutrition / taste		
18. Your choices, so answers will vary		
19. a, d, f		Writing the Conclusion

Task Type 3: Discuss Advantages & Disadvantages		Planning your Answer
1.	b	
2.	c	Writing the Introduction
3.	a) pros and cons b) prolonging work past	
4.	c	Writing Body Paragraph 1
5.	1. benefits 2. enables 3. seems 4. provides 5. individuals	
6.	Disadvantages: c (or b also seems possible) Supporting examples: a	Writing Body Paragraph 2
7.	1. On <u>the</u> other hand 2. <u>a</u> full time job 3. <u>the</u> workforce	
8.	a) demanding b) remaining c) undertake d) prevent	Writing the Conclusion
9.	b	

Task Type 4: Explain & Offer Solutions or Consequences		Planning your Answer
1. b		
2. c		
3. Your choices, so answers will vary		
4. a) reasons for this phenomenon b) the key to making family life better	Writing the Introduction	
5. a) First of all / In the first place b) Lastly / Finally c) All in all / Taken together d) So / Consequently e) In the same way / Similarly f) Thereby / thus g) Putting it another way / In other words h) The result of this is / As a result i) Such that / so...that j) This can lead to a situation in which / This can mean that	Writing Body Paragraph 1	
6. a) Line 1: big change b) Line 3: biggest social task c) Line 4: good value d) Line 5: good time e) Line 5: big role	Writing Body Paragraph 2	
7. a) harder and longer work b) less family time	Writing the Conclusion	
8. Your conclusion, so answer will vary		

Speaking Fitness Activities – Answer Sheet

Part 1 Q	Answer	Explanation
1	b	a) is too short, and even sounds a little rude c) is still too abrupt and too general
2	c	a) 'place' here means the house, not the suburb b) not sufficiently relevant as it introduces the 'landlord'
3	b	a) too repetitive c) too much hesitation
4	a	b) not polite enough c) asks for an explanation, which assessor can't give
5	b	a) and c) have grammatical problems and lack linking expressions – they are therefore unclear
6		<i>'I have loads of friends.....some from right back when I was at school, from various jobs I've had, and there are the friends I play sport with. I've always been a friendly sort of person so I find it easy to get on with people when I meet them. But, I suppose I'd say I only have one or two true friends – friends I completely trust, I mean.'</i>
7	a	b) and c) don't have the higher level vocabulary and idioms that a) has (to catch up with my old friends , bump into my new friends , hang out together).
8	c	
9	b	
10	a	b) and c) use only simpler links: 'and / but / because / so' ; a) uses a wider range: 'even though / however / because / as'
11	c	a) talks more about roads; b) talks about roads and cars (not traffic)
12	b	b) is too direct because it has imperatives, which often seem impolite ('Think about it') and also uses the short, direct forms which can sound abrupt and opinionated ('They can't. It's not possible'). a) and c) use less direct language which sounds more polite.
13	b	Unlike b), responses a) and c) don't show the wider range of strategies for managing hesitation and for retaining a sense of fluency.
14 *		1) I'm sorry, • I didn't catch that. • Could you repeat it, • please? 2) Yes • it's great. • There are plenty of parks, • with tennis courts • and many native plants • flowers • and trees. 3) As I said just before • I'm a bit shy • but I make friends quite easily • maybe because I'm a good listener • and I like asking questions • and showing interest in people.
15 *		a) It's NOR mal to have a lot of FAM ily ar ound you. b) ... so the incREAS ing lev els of TRA ffic are very NO ticeable. c) It's prob ably unLIK ely that CAR acc idents can be sTOP ped compLE Tely. d) ...I'm a good LI stener and I like asking QUE stions and show ing IN terest in pe ople.
16 *		REALLY LOVE EC BEAUT a) I _____ my family, esp _____ ially my grandmother; she's such a _____ iful woman. REALLY EAS SUPER b) I make friends _____ ily; in fact I get _____ excited when I meet new people. TERR TO c) I'm a _____ ible driver. I get _____ tally nervous in heavy traffic, and when I get out of the car I feel like TO WRECK! SO a _____ tal _____ I'm _____ annoyed with myself about it!

* **Note:** slight variations are possible.

Part 2 Q	Answer	Explanation
1	Various	Not Applicable
2 1)	a), d)	Not Applicable
2 2)	e), g)	Not Applicable
2 3)	b), c), h), i), j)	Not Applicable
2 4)	k), f)	Not Applicable
3	b)	(a) is too abrupt and has no introductory sentence; (c) is rather repetitive and suggests the speaker lacks 'true' fluency and flexibility; (b) has a short introduction and establishes some expectation in the listener.
4	a), b)	(a) is unable to use linking words to make his talk smoother and more connected; (b) is uncertain of correct grammar and creates too much hesitation through self correction.
5	b)	(a) has poor grammar and wanders away from a focused answer by starting to talk about himself rather than his brother; (c) also drifts away from the question by focusing on what his brother did rather than why his brother's life interests him
6	c)	(a) and (b) are very short and direct statements, which often sound a little impolite; in (c) the use of 'I think', and '..for now, anyway' helps to soften the ending and makes it sound more polite by extending it a little;
7	c)	(a) and (b) are too repetitive (lack richness) and thus less interesting

Part 2 Complete Talk

Interviewer: *Could you start now, please?*

Candidate: *All right. Well, I suppose all lives are fascinating in some ways, but I'd like to talk briefly about my brother, Pierre. His life has been really extraordinary, at least in my opinion. Let me explain. My brother, Pierre, in fact he's my older brother, as there's five years' difference in our ages, was born in Paris, actually very close to the centre of Paris, where our parents had a very popular, local bakery. Although he was born deaf, Pierre was brilliant at school, especially at mathematics and Art. He also loved the outdoor life and always liked water. As a teenager, I think he was about 14, he went on a course and learned how to sail. He took to sailing like a duck to water, I suppose you could say. After finishing school, he sailed solo to New Zealand in a small sailing boat. This seemed amazing... and really adventurous to me, his little brother, especially as I was a bit of a stay-at-home geek, ...at that time, anyway. Now, where was I? Oh yes. In New Zealand, he met a beautiful, Maori girl, actually she's not deaf, and eventually they got married. He went to Art School over there and is now a well-recognised artist. I've seen some of his work...it's pretty good. He paints landscapes mainly, or to be more precise, I should say, seascapes. I suppose my brother has always seemed especially interesting to me because he was born deaf and as children this created distance between us. As a younger brother I wanted to look up to him, but it was not easy as his disability made him seem so different, so self-contained and unique. But he inspired me because he has many talents, and never let his deafness stop him from taking risks, or from seeking adventure. In some ways, he is still a mystery to me, always intriguing, almost a bit mythical. Er...I think that's all I have to say on this topic, ...for now, anyway.*

Interviewer: *Thank you. Do you see your brother very often?*

Candidate: *Not as often as I'd like. He came over to Paris last year for our parents' 30th wedding anniversary but flights are a bit too expensive for us to get together regularly.*

Part 3 Q	Answer	Explanation
1	b	<p>(b) is probably the most effective response as it provides two good examples of exciting activities and then develops one of those activities (boar hunting) in an interesting way.</p> <p>(a) offers plenty of examples but they are not really relevant to the idea of 'exciting'. Also this response loses its focus by starting to talk about money and personal interests.</p> <p>(c) starts well by questioning the meaning of 'excitement' but then just talks about personal things, and loses relevance.</p> <p>NOTE: Responses (a) and (c) might negatively affect final score on 'fluency and coherence' because examiners usually can sense if a candidate is 'filling' time with 'easy to use' language rather than having enough richness, flexibility and control.</p>
2	c	<p>(c) seems the most natural, as the candidate is genuinely reflecting on his/her own reasons and then suggesting that caution is not unusual. The candidate doesn't seem to feel any sense of shame in admitting a sort of lack of courage, which is a personal style of response quite common among adults in western-style cultures.</p> <p>(a) is also an honest response but seems abrupt because it has no 'lead-in' expressions such as 'I like to think that I'm...' in response (c). The examiner might consider this response a little too direct and unsubtle.</p> <p>(b) This response contradicts the questioner, but contradicting in response to a question is fine. However, again, this response is also a little too direct and fails to give any reasons, in response to the 'why' in the question. So it's not really a very relevant answer either.</p>
3	c	<p>c) is the response which has the greatest variety of sentence connecting expressions (because / even though / however / who are...) Although this response sounds a little more formal than the others as a result, it is displaying flexibility of grammar more effectively than the other responses .</p> <p>(a) and (b) sound natural and have good vocabulary but display less variety of clause connection.</p>
4	a	<p>(a) has the richest use of vocabulary (a whole host of reasons, / generally speaking / the pressure of building a career / struggle to find permanent / a succession of temporary positions / feel financially secure / face the responsibility / depend on both partners / potential to earn / is put off)</p> <p>(b) and (c) are good, relevant answers but are a little more repetitive in terms of vocabulary use - the word 'jobs' for example is over-used.</p>
5	b	<p>(b) is the most competent at linking ideas in a varied way (Even though... / more than / in terms of... / While... / Compared to... / For example,.. / whereas... / because... /so from that point of view...).</p> <p>(a) and (c) are good answers but rely a little too much on simple linkers such as 'but' or 'and' or 'so' to link ideas.</p>

IELTS Full Practice Test Answer Sheet (General Training)

Q#	Listening test	Reading test
1	Wong	(the) government
2	Jacqui	flow / flow of water / water flow
3	014830579	\$150 / 150
4	7	water retention / water retention qualities
5	\$90	plumbed-in (tank) / connected (tank)
6	C	3000 litres
7	B	(the) conditions
8	C	iv
9	B	vi
10	C	vii
11	improves	viii
12	replace	v
13	750	i
14	limited	ii
15	regular	partly
16	bulky	availability
17	convenient	swimming
18	drinks	service
19	pricey / pricy	alternative
20	technology	home
21	A, D (<i>both needed</i>)	T
22	writing	T
23	title / titles	F
24	planning	T
25	structuring / structure / disorganised / disorganized	NG
26	tutor	F
27	lectures / lecturer	T
28	clear	B
29	wastes	D
30	background	C
31	B	E
32	B	C
33	A	F
34	C	G
35	B	Y
36	positive	N
37	view	NG
38	missing	Y
39	expected	Y
40	interact / together	NG



Note:

'/' means alternative answer, '()' means optional part of the answer

Listening Fitness Activities - Transcripts

Listening Fitness Activity 1 (Page 21)

Chris: ...We've all just met so perhaps we should start by an introduction with a bit of background from each of us.

Anna: OK. I'm Anna. I finished three years of a Languages degree in Sweden, where I come from. This year I decided to study overseas to get to know a different part of the world. I'm also a big fan of European cinema, especially French and Italian. Those are the languages I majored in along with English. To me, film is a great way to learn about the rest of the world. I was in the film club at my university so when I saw the notice asking for volunteers, I thought it would be a good way to meet people and get involved in something I really enjoy.

Veronica: Thanks, Anna. My name is Veronica and I come from Italy. I'm doing graduate studies in English Literature. I went to some of the films in the festival last year and enjoyed them. I especially liked the video interviews. That was when I decided to get involved. I used to do film reviews for our student newspaper back home

Chris: Hi I'm Chris from Scotland and I'm in 4th year Journalism. Cinema is my hobby. Last year I joined the organizing committee, just like you have now, and somehow, this year I've ended up in charge. I'm actually able to use my coordinating work on the festival towards a credit for one of my courses. I have to write up a report on the festival with recommendations so that's an extra motivation for me. So I hope this is going to be a good experience for us all.

Listening Fitness Activity 2 (Page 22)

Mark: ... Any other trends that you thought were significant?

Evelyn: Well what's really interesting is what the article called 'mobile meals'. In other words more and more Canadians are eating meals away from home, but NOT just eating more junk food. They are projecting a 40% increase in snack food sales over the next three years and the growth is coming from healthy snacks – you know the ones that have less cholesterol and fat, such as muesli bars, health food bars and those types of products. Apparently in the food marketing jargon they are called "nutritious portable foods" which means healthy snacks! The other major trend is that young people are doing more of the food shopping these days so marketing has to be aimed more at them, as well as more conventionally at the mother.

Listening Fitness Activity 3 (Page 23)

Veronica: ... Where does the funding come from? What kind of budget do we have?

Chris: The festival is subsidised by the student council. We generate money through advertising and through admission charges. We'll go over the budget in detail a little later. But we've got lots of work to do in the meantime.

Anna: I guess we have to start pretty soon.

Chris: Well, I think by the first of March at the latest, we need to select all the films. Then we have to find some advertisers to sponsor the event - that shouldn't be too hard. We'll just start with last year's list. Our deadline for that should be the middle of March. By the end of March we need to design the program. Then we can get posters made up and distributed in April.

Veronica: Like you said, we need some clever promotion - something to generate interest and get people talking. We have 4 months to get ready. It should be enough time.

Listening Fitness Activity 4 (Page 24)

Typewriters in 1873 jammed or got stuck if the keys next to each other were hit in quick succession. To solve this problem, in 1878, the QWERTY keyboard was developed, spacing frequent letters away from each other, and therefore reducing the number of jams. It was not specifically designed to slow down typists, as is generally believed, but the keyboard did create a built-in inefficiency for typists. The most common keys are scattered all over the keyboard rows, many on the left side. Right-handed people have to use their left hand, which is the weaker hand. Typewriter technology improved, doing away with the original rationale for the QWERTY distribution, but the keyboard remained. In spite of its inefficiency, it is the keyboard we all use today.

Listening Fitness Activity 5 (Page 25)

Agent: Ok, who's next, please?

Jenny Lee: I think I am.

Agent: How can I help you?

Jenny Lee: I just came in on flight 372 from Singapore at 11:30 and my luggage hasn't arrived. I've been waiting at the baggage claim for about a half an hour now and everything seems to have come off the plane. The conveyor belt has stopped and all the passengers have gone. So I came here to find out what has happened to my bag.

Agent: Can I see your ticket please?

Jenny Lee: Here it is.

Agent: So you came from Hong Kong today and changed planes in Singapore, right?

Jenny Lee: Yes, the connection in Singapore was a tight one. The plane got in late and I had to rush to get to the next flight.

Agent: That's the problem right there. There wasn't enough time to get your bags onto the connecting flight.

Listening Fitness Activity 6 (Page 26)

- Agent:** Now, I need you to fill in these forms. Your name?
- Jenny Lee:** Jenny Lee
- Agent:** Address?
- Jenny Lee:** I guess you want my address here. I'm staying with relatives. Just a minute, I'll have to look it up. It looks like 583, no its 533 East 67th St. in Riverside.
- Agent:** Do you have the phone number there?
- Jenny Lee:** Yes I do. It's um 93014269.
- Agent:** So you came in on Qantas Flight... *(fades)*

Listening Fitness Activity 7 (Page 27)

Thank you for calling ATS Advanced Ticketing System, the call system for all your entertainment needs. Our automated telephone service is designed to answer your questions quickly and easily. The ATS office in the Regency Theatre is open Monday to Thursdays from 10am-5 pm and on Friday and Saturday till 8 pm. For online bookings and detailed program listings check our website at www.atstix.com. That's spelled A-T-S-T-I-X. Please listen to the choices available. You may press your choice as soon as you hear it to get more information.

Listening Fitness Activity 8 (Page 28)

- Henry:** Look there's the notice that Professor Jones told us he'd be putting up confirming the details of our work experience placements.
- Jo:** But I thought that was already arranged.
- Henry:** No, he said he'd have to check with the companies that the days we preferred were OK for them – let's see if any have changed. Theresa's not here today, but her name's first – it says the Uni Bookshop, Friday mornings, starting on the 23rd March, so nothing's changed. I'll let her know.
- Jo:** What about Manuel? He's not here either. Is he still going to the music store in the High St?
- Henry:** If it's Mainly Music, yes he's still down for that, on Friday afternoons, starting on the 9th.
- Jo:** Um.. the day's different – it's changed from Tuesday mornings, but that's OK, I'll tell him. He'll really enjoy listening to music all day!
- Henry:** Now where's my name...Henry...here it is...I'm going to The Beauty Shop, and I said I preferred Thursday afternoons...oh good, that seems OK and my start date hasn't changed either. Jo, what day did you opt for? *(fades)*

Listening Fitness Activity 9 (Page 28)

The superiority of the Dvorak keyboard was clearly established. However, it has never been adopted as the keyboard of choice. Why? First of all, bad luck and bad timing on the part of the Dvorak team. First there was the Depression, not a good time for introducing change. But the main factor that worked against the Dvorak system was habit. People were used to the QWERTY keyboard. Computers today could easily switch the arrangement of letters to the Dvorak layout, but it seems that because of habit, the QWERTY layout remains dominant. People felt comfortable with the keyboard they learned on so it was the established patterns of hundreds of millions of typists, manufacturers, typing teachers and typewriter salespeople that have crushed all moves toward keyboard efficiency for over 70 years. It looks like QWERTY keyboard may be with us for a long time yet.

Listening Fitness Activity 10 (Page 29)

Probably the most important part of public speaking is what you do beforehand, by which I mean preparation. This includes practical details such as knowing precisely what your topic is and exactly how long you are expected to talk for. You should also plan the content thoroughly. A good strategy is to write out the content as you intend to say it and then make brief notes, preferably on small cards, which you use to talk from. This way you sound more natural, you incorporate pauses while you look at your notes and you can then look at your audience while you are speaking. Never read your speech without looking at the audience. Eye contact is a very important part of communicating with an audience; so deliberately move your head and look around at your audience. Pauses are important as most people when they are nervous tend to rush through their speech. Practise speaking slowly, this gives you more time to pronounce your words correctly. It's always easier for your audience to listen to someone whose speaking is clear and calmly paced so that they can understand the ideas being explained. And the bigger the group the more slowly you should speak. Remember to project your voice, speaking clearly to the person furthest away from you.

Practice Interview 1 (Questions Only) Transcript

Hello, my name is Sally Robinson, could you tell me your full name, please?

OK. And what shall I call you?

Can I see your identification, please?

Thank you. Now in Part 1 of the interview, I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself. Let's talk about where you live:

- ⇒ Where is your home town or city?
- ⇒ In what ways is it a nice place in which to live?
- ⇒ Are any parts of your home town dangerous at night?
- ⇒ What changes would most improve your home town?

Let's go on to talk about walking now.

- ⇒ How far do you walk each day?
- ⇒ Where do you go for a walk if you want to relax?
- ⇒ What do you enjoy about walking?
- ⇒ How could everyone be encouraged to walk more?

Let's move on to talk about photos now?

- ⇒ How often do you take photos?
- ⇒ What kinds of photo do you most like taking?
- ⇒ Do you have any really special or favourite photos?
- ⇒ Why do you think photos may become less important in the future?

Thank you. Now I'm going to give you a topic and I want you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before you talk there will be one minute to think about what you are going to say, and to make notes. Is that OK? Here's a pencil and paper for making notes and here's your topic. Could you talk about a time when you were a child and got into trouble?

Talk about a time when you were a child and got into trouble.

You should say:

how old you were
 what you did that got you into trouble
 what happened afterwards

and say why you still remember this occasion so clearly

OK? Remember you have two minutes for your talk, so don't worry if I stop you. I'll let you know when the two minutes is up. Could you start talking now, please?

Thank you.

⇒ Were you a naughty child?

Thank you. I'll take the task card and paper and pencil back now.

You've been talking about a time when you were a child and got into trouble and I'd like to discuss with you a few more questions related to the same topic. So let's consider first of all... children's behaviour.

⇒ Tell me what usually happens to a child in your country when they are naughty.

⇒ That was an interesting answer, erm... to what extent do you think parents today are generally kinder to their children than parents were in the past?

⇒ Thank you. OK Let's move on to discuss the effects of parenting. To what extent do you think it is acceptable to slap children who are naughty?

⇒ So, do you think children who are slapped lose respect for their parents?

⇒ Mm being a parent is complicated isn't it. OK. Finally let's move on to consider punishment in society. Is capital punishment ever justified in your opinion?

⇒ You have obviously realised the complexity of that question, but thinking ahead, do you think punishments in society will get harsher or softer in the future?

I suppose we'll have to wait and see if your view of the future turns out to be right, won't we? Thank you. That is the end of the interview.

IELTS Practice Listening Test Transcript

*IELTS Success Formula by Stephen Slater and Simone Braverman. Practice Listening Test.
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You will hear a number of recordings and must answer questions on what you hear. You will have some time to read the questions and instructions and to check your work. You will hear each recording once only.

The test is in four sections. At the end of the test you will have ten minutes to transfer your answers to an answer sheet.

Please now turn to Section 1.

SECTION 1

You will hear a telephone conversation between a receptionist at a backpacker hostel, and a tourist. First you have some time to look at questions 1 to 5.

You will see that there is an example which has been done for you. The part of the conversation relating only to the example will be played first now.

(sound of telephone ringing)

Receptionist: Good morning, Seafront Backpacker Hostel, Bayview Heights.

Customer: Oh, hi. I'm a student and I'm looking for some low-priced accommodation on the beach.

Receptionist: Well, our prices are pretty good, and we have plenty of students staying here. But usually we ask you some basic questions for our guest enquiry form first. Is that OK?

Customer: Yes, that's fine.

R: Let's start with your current address. Where are you staying at the moment?

C: I'm staying at the Seaview Hotel, 15, The Esplanade...along the coast, at Dune Beach...

R: Mmm...that's a nice place.

C: Yeah it's great, but it's a bit too expensive for me.

The first part of the address is called 'Seaview Hotel', so this has been written on the form. Now the full test will begin.

Answer the questions as you listen because you will not hear the recording a second time. Listen carefully and answer questions 1 to 5.

(sound of telephone ringing)

Receptionist: Good morning, Seafront Backpacker Hostel, Bayview Heights.

Customer: Oh, hi. I'm a student and I'm looking for some low-priced accommodation on the beach.

Receptionist: Well, our prices are pretty good, and we have plenty of students staying here. But usually we ask you some basic questions for our guest enquiry form first. Is that OK?

Customer: Yes, that's fine.

R: Let's start with your current address. Where are you staying at the moment?

C: I'm staying at the Seaview Hotel, 15, The Esplanade...along the coast, at Dune Beach...

R: Mmm...that's a nice place.

C: Yeah it's great, but it's a bit too expensive for me.

R: Yes, so I've heard. And can I ask you your full name please?

C: It's Jacqui Wong.

R: Can you spell that for me, please?

C: Ok.... My family name is Wong , that's W-O-N-G

R: uhuh, and your given name?

C: My given name is Jacqui but I spell it in an unusual way, J-A-C-O-U-I

R: Ok,got it....And do you have a mobile phone number?

C: Yes, it's 014...830... 579.

R: Sorry did you say 579 for the last three numbers?

C: That's right.

R: How many nights would you like to stay with us here at the Hostel?

C: Well that depends on the cost. How much is it for one night?

R: In our larger, 12-bed dormitory B, it's only \$15 per night,

C: That sounds much better value than the Seaview Hotel. ...Look, I know it's short notice... but do you have a vacancy for me for 7 nights, starting from tonight?

R: Well, luckily for you, I think we do. One of our guests had to leave early this morning because her father is sick,so I think we can fit you in. By the way, the cost goes down to \$90 if you stay for a full week of 7 nights.

C: Really? That's great...and a big relief. My money's running a bit low.

Before you hear the rest of the same conversation you have some time to look at questions 6 to 10.

Now listen and answer questions 6 to 10

C: I'd like to know what facilities you have at your Hostel?

R: Well I suppose our accommodation is a bit simpler than at the Seaview Hotel. We have 2 large dormitories, 3 bathrooms....each with a shower and constant hot water;er...we also supply towels, at a small cost; erm... there is free use of the internet, and a TV lounge. There is a small parking charge for cars, but ...there's no charge for bikes.

C: Sounds fine.

R: Oh yes...and we offer you a simple breakfast, continental-style, free.

C: That's great...a lot of backpacker hostels don't offer that. By the way, how do I get to your backpacker hostel from here at Dune Beach?

R: Are you in a car?

C: No, I'm on my bicycle.

R: Well, your best bet is to take the road from Dune Beach to Selby. You take a small road off to the right, very near to your hotel on the Esplanade. It's a narrow road, but quiet. I always advise guests on bikes to use it as it's definitely much safer for cycling.

C: OK. Where do I go from Selby?

R: In Selby, just by the Church, you'll see a sign to Bay View Heights. It will probably take you about another thirty minutes.

C: Is your hostel easy to find?

R: Yes it's on the sea front, it's located right at the very end of Beach Road... up a hill ...next to a Retirement Home. The views of the ocean are really great.

C: Sounds lovely. Is there somewhere safe at your hostel I can keep my bike?

R: Yes...absolutely no problem. You can store it in our hostel garage at night.

C: That's a relief. Oh, I forgot to ask if you have any animals at your hostel?

R: That's an unusual question. Well the manager has a small dog. Other than that, we get the occasional fox in the garden, usually at night. Why do you ask?

C: Well, dogs are not a problem but I'm allergic to cat fur ...it makes my skin go red and I come out in a rash...Not sure about foxes.

R: Mmm...sounds painful. But don't worry, no cats or foxes indoors here!

That is the end of section 1. You now have half a minute to check your answers.

Now turn to Section 2.

SECTION 2

You will hear a presenter of a radio program for consumers, discussing different coffee machines. First you have some time to look at questions 11 to 17.

Now listen carefully and answer questions 11 to 17.

Hello there listeners, and welcome to your weekly consumer program, Best Buys. Today we're looking at 3 excellent coffee machines at different prices. We'll look at the pluses and minuses and then give our overall assessment for each machine. So let's get started....

Our first stylish, coffee maker is the simplest one. It's called the '**Coffee Supreme**'. OK..., positive points first. Well,...with this machine, you can brew more than four cups of coffee, either mild or strong. Also, it has a water filtration system with a cartridge and this improves the taste of the coffee. It also has overflow protection and a drip-stop function.... and all parts are easy to replace. But,...on the negative side, it doesn't have an automatic coffee grinder. Also, the Coffee Supreme has only a small 750 watt electrical system.So now the verdict. Our overall assessment for this attractive, little machine is that it is good value, but has a rather limited performance.

The next machine is a step up in price but has more options. It's called **Café Delight**. On the plus side, this machine combines a regular coffee maker with an espresso machine. It has a steam nozzle and a frothing attachment for making either cappuccinos or café lattes. Also you can make coffee in two ways – either into a cup or into the 40 ounce glass container which sits on its own warming plate. The downside is that the machine is bulky, because it's about 40 cm wide and 30cm high. But...as a lot of our people seem to like either drip coffee or the stronger Espresso style, on balance, our overall evaluation is that it's both flexible and convenient.

Before you hear the rest of the program you have some time to look at questions 18 to 20.

Now listen and answer questions 18 to 20.

The third coffee machine is the most expensive... but it's really hi-tech. It's called **Coffeetime automatic**. This machine is good because it can make different drinks – ...not just coffee, but hot chocolate and tea. It uses an electronic 'disc' which automatically calculates water volume, brewing time and temperature for either coffee, tea, chocolate or milk. You can even make different drinks, one after another. Another plus is that there is an automatic cleaning and descaling system, and an automatic coffee grinder.But, on the negative side it's rather pricey and rather large, maybe too large for some small kitchens. In fact if I wanted it in my kitchen I would have to build a bigger kitchen. So our overall assessment is that it's bulky but makes good use of up-to-date technology.

Overall then, I suppose with coffee machines you get what you pay for. But perhaps simplicity is important. So good luck out there when you go shopping and remember...(fades)

That is the end of section 2. You now have half a minute to check your answers.

Now turn to Section 3.

SECTION 3

You will hear a conversation between John Grey, a study support adviser, and two students, Wilson and Grace, who have study problems.

First you have some time to look at questions 21 to 26.

Now listen carefully and answer questions 21 to 26.

J: Thanks for coming along, Grace and Wilson. My name's John Grey and I'm one of the Study Support advisers.... As you are new students and have asked to discuss what we can do to help you with your study problems, I'd like first to outline the purposes and approach to Learning Support here at Broadway University. Then I'll ask each of you to describe the sort of issues you have and then say what we might offer you. Is that OK?

G: Yes.

W: That's fine.

J: OK Let's start then. Well, basically our purpose at Student Support is to help students to become more independent. We do this by showing them effective strategies they can use, not by doing the studying for them. Another purpose is to help students to understand some of the cultural differences between their own culture and the cultural context here in this country. In that sense we are encouraging students to make comparisons but not to make judgements about them. I suppose a final purpose is to help students to build relationships inside our culture by encouraging them to relate openly to us.

But that's enough from me. Perhaps, Wilson, you could talk about the sort of study problems you are having and I'll suggest some options.

W: Well my main problems at the moment seem to be connected with writing rather than lectures or seminars.

J: OK...Could you say a little more about what your problems with writing are exactly?

W: Well, I find I can't understand the assignment titles... they're often unclear to me,...I mean the central ideas... or what is sort of ...underneath the title words. Then usually I can't find enough readings or make a good enough plan.

J: Well.... we have a special session that looks at essay planning in each academic area. You're in Business aren't you, so maybe you could come to the Business essay session.

W: That would be great.

J: Anything else about your writing?

W: I find that the structuring of the essays I write is a real difficulty for me. My essays are always very disorganised.

J: Well, on Tuesdays during each semester we have essay writing sessions and you can make an appointment with a tutor to discuss your essay draft. Would that be helpful?

W: Yes, it sounds good.

Before you hear the rest of the conversation, you have some time to look at questions 27 to 30.

Now listen and answer questions 27 to 30.

J: What about you, Grace?

G: Well my problems are a bit different. I'm having great difficulty following the lectures in my Nursing Course. ...The lecturers seem to come from different countries and they talk really fast and are not always very clear. I can't keep up.

...and I end up with very poor lecture notes.

J: Have you tried recording the lectures?

G: Yes, but I still can't understand them and it just wastes time.

J: Well, you might try talking to your course coordinator to see if some of the lecture notes are in Powerpoint form or whether the lecturers have notes they can give you. Or you might ask one of the local students to let you look at their notes and discuss the lecture with you.

G: I'd be a bit embarrassed to ask the lecturer.

J: Well, one of our Support staff can contact the lecturer for you, if you like, to start with.

G: Oh, OK, thank you.

J: Anything else that's a problem?

G: Well, this isn't really a study problem but I'm finding that I'm not sleeping well.

J: I'm sorry to hear that. Is there something you are worried about?

G: I'm worried about the course, there's too much information to deal with. ...Also, I had an email from my parents recently saying that my grandmother is not well and I'm worried about her. I feel I should go back to be with her.

J: It sounds as though you need to talk to someone who can listen in more detail to this situation. We have some really good counsellors from different cultural backgrounds. I know you might not feel comfortable about this but I could help you make a time today, if you like.

G: I'm not sure ...it's all rather new.

J: OK.... why don't you think about it...and come back to see me again this afternoon?

G: OK, thanks...I'm so sorry to be a problem to you.

J: You're not a problem at all, Grace,we're here to help.

That is the end of section 3. You now have half a minute to check your answers.

Now turn to Section 4.

SECTION 4

You will hear part of a lecture about effective management skills given by a business studies lecturer. First, you have some time to look at questions 31 to 40.

Now listen carefully and answer questions 31 to 40.

Today, in my final talk on effective management skills, I want to discuss with you ideas connected with the place of emotional intelligence in the workplace. In recent years, management researchers have realised that an organisation is not just a place with a structure, with bosses and workers and rules, but is a place where feelings can have a huge impact on the effectiveness of work and workplace relationships.

First of all, then what is emotional intelligence? Well, no doubt you all know about intelligence tests, IQ tests, and the usual measurement of intelligence. Well it has been realised that there are other types of intelligence which can be vital to the tasks of management. Emotional intelligence, or E.I. as it is sometimes called, is one of these. Basically, then, E.I. involves a range of abilities connected to feelings. For example, it involves **self awareness**, or, in other words, the ability to be aware of your own emotions as you experience them. Another dimension of E.I. naturally enough is the ability to recognize other people's feelings, or at least to imagine what other people are feeling under certain conditions. We sometimes call this ability **empathy**. Then there is the ability to **manage your own emotions**, and to manage them in a positive and constructive way, thereby helping to motivate yourself. Finally, E.I. involves the ability to **manage relationships**, which involves the positive management of other people's emotions, and this last ability is part of being an effective leader, as well as being linked to being personally popular, or, as we say in plain English... just knowing how to be 'good with people'.

It doesn't take much of your or anyone's intelligence to realise how important all these qualities are to a happy and open workplace—a workplace where people communicate openly, trust and respect one another, feel valued and understood, and thus work well together, is more productive, ...and probably... more creative. But quite a number of otherwise intelligent and technically competent managers are not emotionally intelligent, and this means they need to learn these interpersonal skills in order to become more effective at their jobs.

So what underlies our emotional intelligence? What feeds into emotional intelligence and enables it to be developed? Clearly a key part of being emotionally intelligent is our own view of ourselves, how we see ourselves, or as it is sometimes called, our self-image. With a positive self image, which means, if we like ourselves, we are probably more able to support other people in our relationships with them. So managers with good self images are more likely to be a positive influence inside any organisation,

But self image is neither completely straightforward, nor simple.

Basically there seem to be three central aspects to how we see ourselves.

First, there is our **perceived self**, which basically means what we think we are like, ...our internal view of ourselves in our mind's mirror, if you like. If we value ourselves and have high self esteem and self confidence, then other people will feel this in us, and will feel a little of it in their relationship with us.

Then there is how we would like ourselves to be, which is sometimes called our **desired self**, and obviously refers to the gap between what we perceive ourselves to be, and what we think is missing in ourselves, what improvements we would like to make in ourselves, if you like. For example, many shy people would like to be more assertive. But, obviously, if we have too much desire to change ourselves, it probably means we may not like ourselves enough the way we are.

Finally there are **the 'selves' we present to others**, our public faces, if you like, or, as sociologists express it, our roles. Roles involve expected forms of presentation of self, a bit like parts in a drama, or a play. For example, if you are a manager, your staff will probably expect you to behave in a certain way because this is what they expect of you. For example, you may be expected to give clear instructions and to make good decisions. Through the effective acting out of their work roles, managers can partly control the impressions other workers have of them, either gaining face, if these workers build a positive view of them, or, losing face if they behave in unusual ways...perhaps at the same time losing their authority.

Of course these three aspects of self image interact. In other words, they operate together at the same time, not in isolation. Research seems to suggest that there is a degree of stability in the main ways we communicate, or in our styles of communication, if you like.

So, overall, then a good manager needs a good self image... and a good manager needs to be able to build and use emotional intelligence. A successful modern organisation cannot ignore these psychological needs if it wants to succeed (*fades...*).

That is the end of Section 4. You now have half a minute to check your answers.

That is the end of the IELTS Success Formula Practice Listening Test. You now have 10 minutes to transfer your answers to the Listening Test Answer Sheet.

IELTS Practice Interview 2 (Questions Only) Transcript

Hello, my name is Ben Fulton. Could you tell me your full name, please?

OK, and what shall I call you?

That's fine, and can I see your identification, please?

Thank you. Now in Part 1 of the interview, I'm going to ask you some questions about yourself. Let's talk about where you grew up.

⇒ Where were you born?

⇒ In what ways has your birthplace changed since then?

⇒ Where would be a good place in your country for children to grow up these days?

⇒ Where in your country would you most like to live in the future, and why?

Let's go on to talk about shoes now.

⇒ When did you last buy some shoes? (What kind were they?)

⇒ Do you buy shoes mainly for comfort or to be fashionable?

⇒ Tell me about your favourite pair of shoes.

⇒ Do you think shoes last as long as they used to?

Let's move on to talk about kitchens.

⇒ What do you enjoy doing most when you are in the kitchen?

⇒ Is the kitchen in your house usually tidy or untidy?

⇒ Do you prefer a kitchen with a gas cooker or with an electric cooker, and why?

⇒ What things are stuck to the front of the fridge in your kitchen?

Thank you. Now, I'm going to give you a topic and I want you to talk about it for 1-2 minutes. Before you talk there will be one minute to think about what you are going to say, and to make notes. Is that OK? Here's a pencil and paper for making notes, and here's your topic. Could you talk about your favourite movie star?

Talk about your favourite movie star.

You should say:

who your favourite movie star is
 what kinds of movies they have appeared in
 what sort of person you think they are in real life

and say why you like this movie star so much

OK? Remember you have two minutes for your talk, so don't worry if I stop you. I'll let you know when the two minutes is up. Could you start talking now, please?

Thank you.

⇒ Do you go to the movies very often?

Thank you. I'll take the task card and paper and pencil back now.

You've been talking about your favourite movie star and I'd like to discuss with you a few more questions related to the same topic. So let's consider first of all... movies today.

⇒ Can you tell me about some movies that have been really popular recently?

⇒ Mm, some of those sound really good, erm... are movies today better than they were when your parents were young, do you think?

Thank you....an interesting reply. OK Let's move on now to discuss fame and movie stars.

⇒ Is being famous a good thing or a bad thing, do you think?

⇒ I see, so, do you think you could handle being famous?

I suppose many people would feel the same as you do. Finally let's discuss movies and society.

⇒ In what ways do movies help you to understand your society better?

⇒ Ok, that's fine but aren't most movies really made for commercial success rather than to help you to understand society better?

OK, thanks for your ideas, but we'll have to stop now as that is the end of the interview.