



IELTS EXAM

STRUCTURE + TIME + TIPS

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IELTS Exam: structure + time + tips

Summary of IELTS courses

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Source: all the information here is taking from various resources such as the Lancaster University course, IELTS books, British council website, free courses at FutureLearn website, and YouTube videos.

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Exam Parts

- Listening part: 40 minutes and 40 questions
 - Reading: 60 minutes and 40 questions.
 - Writing part: 60 minutes, you need to write two paragraphs: the first part is 150 words, the second part is 250 words. The type of task depends on the model.
 - Speaking: 11-12 minutes. It consists of three parts.
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Section 1: An Overview

There are two models:

- Academic model: for those who want to study at university.
- General model: for those who want to move to another country and need English qualification. Almost for work or emigration purpose.

The exam includes testing for four skills: at both models, listening and speaking parts are the same questions but it is different in reading and writing part.

Reading, writing, and listening test: at the same day

Speaking: on a different day usually, but it could be on the same day.

Speaking part: it is 13 minutes consists of three parts:

- Part 1: talking about yourself, your family, your house, your education level, or your job (it is general questions).
- Part 2: they give you a topic with some questions, then give you 1 minutes to prepare your answers, finally, you start talking about this topic and you should use the answers.
- Part 3: ask you some questions connected to part 2.

Section 2: Speaking test

Speaking test is mostly on a different day

It is 11-12 minutes

It consists of three parts:

- Part 1:

It is 5 minutes: talking about yourself, checking your identity, asking you general questions about your family, your home, your studies, your interests, and your job.

Never give a short answer: try to speak more by giving more reasons, your opinion, and more details.

In yes/no question: say "yes" or "No" and explain. Never say yes or no without reasons.

- Part 2:

It is 3-4 minutes: talking about selected topic. First, they give you a piece of paper that have three questions. Second, you will have 1 minute to prepare your answers. Finally, you should talk about this topic using your answers for 2 minutes. Tip: at this part, you should speak fluently and continuously without stopping and be sure you use all answers for all questions.

- Part 3:

It is 4-5 minutes: they ask more open question about the previous topic, they give you a chance to give your opinion or talk about abstract ideas, yes/no question.

Tip: How to improve speaking skill?

- Listen more: you can listen for songs, you can watch short videos clips, then pause and repeat this clip. You can select a topic, then start speaking and record to yourself.
- Speak more: you must speak as much as you can and try to use correct grammar.
- Reading is the best way to extend your vocabulary.
- Speaking test do not looking for the correct accent.

Marking criteria:

- Fluency and coherence:

الطلاقة و التماسك تتحدث طويلا و بشكل مستمر

- Lexical resource:

المفردات: هل لديها كمية من الكلمات تكفي لتصف الموضوع بشكل جيد و استخدام المفردات المناسبة للوصف

- Grammatical range and accuracy:
القواعد التي استخدمتها ودقتها: هل استخدمت القواعد بشكل صحيح؟ هل قواعد بسيطة؟ ولا معقدة؟ هل فيه خطأ ف القاعدة؟
- pronunciation
النطق السليم للكلمات بحيث تكون واضحة مفهومة المعنى، ولا يقصد بها التحدث بالاكسنت.

===== Section 3: Listening =====

It is about listening test

The difficulty of this is the topic, the speaker place, how quickly he speaks, speaker accent.

It is 40 questions: **only 30 minutes to listen + 10 minutes to write your answers into answer sheet.**

These questions are matching, putting labels, choices, completing a table.

- Section 1:
It is a conversation between 2 people about social context.
- Section 2:
It is a monologue only 1 person about social context identify the questions and answers.
- Section 3:
It is a conversation between 2,3,4 persons about educational or training context.
- Section 4:
It is a monologue only 1 person about educational or training context.

Tips for listening test:

- You could read and write at same time.
- First, read the instruction and questions.
- You have 30 seconds before and after each section, you can use this time to underline the keywords in each question.
- Generally, read the question, look for keywords and circle. Then, you would think about what you may hear: days of the week, telephone number, the same words in the question, synonyms of these words in question.
- When you hear, do not wait until the end, answer each question as you hear, if you miss some things, leave him and go to the next, then back again.
- Before you answer, think in other answer.

- Spilling is impotent, any wrong spelling will decrease your score.
- Never leave blank.
- Listen carefully, read question carefully and think about answer, then underline keywords may have same synonyms.

Tip: How to improve my listen:

- The best way is listening more to selected topics you like, then you could listen about it in TV, YouTube, and radio.
- Listen to Ted talk,

===== Section 4: General Writing =====

Skip this part if you are interested in an academic module.

The writing test is 60 minutes.

Writing test consists of two parts:

- 1st part:
You should write a letter asking for information or explaining a situation
At least 150 words for this part.
It is 20 minutes
- 2nd part:
You should write an essay in response to a point of view an argument or a problem
You should give your opinion about something, explain advantages and disadvantage
You should write at least 250 words.
It is the way to how well you can communicate in written English
You should show a variety of vocabulary and grammar.
It is 40 minutes.

Marking criteria for writing part:

- Task achievement/response: give a full answer
- Coherence and cohesion: look at your writing how is organized logically with clear progression.
- Lexical resource: use wide range of vocabulary.
- Grammatical range and accuracy: use wide range of structures and different tenses

How to improve my writing in English:

- Listening a lot
- Reading a lot
- Look at other emails
- Practice is the key.

===== Section 5: Reading =====

Reading is 60 minutes, and 40 questions.
It is three sections, and the total is 2500 words.

Type of questions:

- Multiple choice question
- Match heading
- Fill gaps by text
- Write short answer

In reading there is different between "general" & "academic" modules

- In the academic module:
There is only one reading text in each of three sections.
It is taken from books, newspaper, magazines.
The topic is general interest, may contain diagrams, graphs
- In the general training module:
The section might contain more than one short text.
 - Section 1: you might see several short texts.
 - Section 2: contains two texts about related work.
 - Section 3: only one long text.

Tip for reading part:

- Read quickly & understand the main points
- Not necessary to understand all details.
- Read the first sentence of each paragraph to take overall idea.
- Never read line by line, just understand the idea of each paragraph.
- First, read the first line of each paragraph and give a title, second read questions and underline the keywords, third, search for the paragraph that might have the answer using the title, finally, search for the answer in this paragraph.
- Often the answer will be at the first two lines or the last two lines in each paragraph.
- You need to be able to read for general understanding, be able to find particular information.

Type of questions at reading part:

- Choice.
- T & F
- Matching information
- Matching headings,
- Sentence completion

To improve your reading skills:

- Select an interested topic for you, read about it.
- Read classic book.
- Read stores.

===== **Section 6: An Academic Writing** =====

Academic writing

It contains two tasks:

- **First part (Task 1):** you have a diagram, graph, or paragraph and you summarize in your own words.
For the diagram and graph part, you should write a description of the important information.
It is 20 minutes.
So you must identify the main idea or describe the stage of the process
You must write at least 150 words.
- **Second part (Task 2):** write an essay in response to a point of view "argument or problem"
The topic will be a thing that will be suitable for people at the university level
You have to write in an academic "semi-formal or neutral style".
You must write at least 250 words.
Maybe ask you about your opinion, or maybe ask you to share your own experience

Tips for academic writing:

- **Task 1:** describe graph, chart, table, diagram, or map. Use only 20 minutes and make the rest of your time to **task 2**, because it is worth more marks.
- Read carefully.
- Write a short introduction by paraphrase the question "write the question in your own words "
- Give summary never contain a number.
- Use a variety of vocabulary and structure.
- Separate your paragraphs.
- Make comparisons where you can.
- Describe specific details.
- Divide your main description into two or three paragraphs.
- Avoid giving your opinion in task 1.
- Do not describe every single detail because "there is a lot of numbers, you don't need to mention all of them. Only give a brief overall view.
- Here some exam questions sample: <http://t.co/kk9nsJHB>