

Index

Table of Contents	Page
-------------------	------

What is IELTS	2
---------------	---

Bands in IELTS	3
----------------	---

IELTS Scoring in Detail	4
-------------------------	---

Advantages of IELTS	6
---------------------	---

IELTS for Study	7
-----------------	---

Some Interesting facts about IELTS	8
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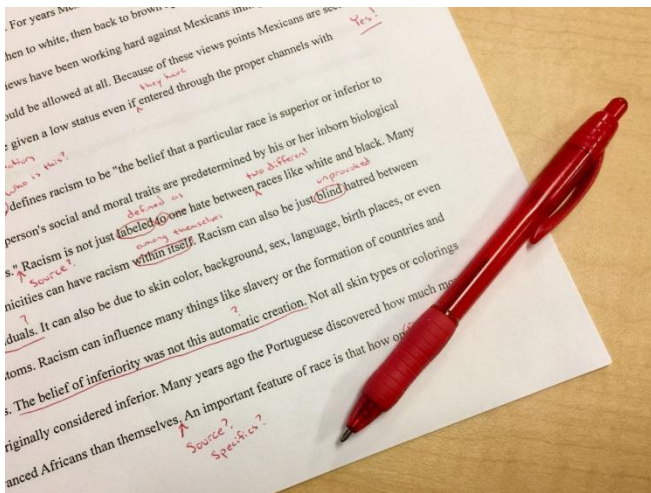
Common Mistakes during Exam	10
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Why take a preparation course	11
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IELTS Beginner's Guide 2019

What is IELTS?

Once you are studying English or you're planning to undertake an academic program overseas, everyone talks about the IELTS test. When it comes to moving to another country to continue your studies or with immigration purposes, again, IELTS is something you hear about, but, what is this test?



International **E**nglish **L**anguage **T**esting **S**ystem is one of the most recognised English certifications in the world, whether you are a student or worker aiming to migrate. Now, among all the options you have to prove your English level to the world, IELTS is a test that treats all candidates with the same fairness, avoiding cultural bias and accepting all standard varieties of English.

It is also one of the most available tests to prove your English. It can be undertaken in more than 1,100 locations in the world with many test dates each year.

There are two types of IELTS tests
Academic and the **General** version.

- If you want to study a bachelor or postgraduate program in an English-speaking country you need to take the Academic version.
- Otherwise, to prove proficiency to migrate for work or training reasons, the General test is required.

One of the main benefits of the IELTS test is its objectiveness. Sometimes you are told that your English is amazing or perhaps you always do well in the class tests. The IELTS test will tell you exactly what your level is and you'll be able to compare it against global standards.

How does IELTS work?

IELTS has been developed by some of the world's leading language assessment experts and will test the full range of English skills needed for success in your new job or study placement abroad.

The IELTS test assesses your abilities in listening, reading, writing and speaking – in less than three hours.

You'll be assessed on the following elements:

- Listening : 30min
- Reading : 60min
- Writing : 60min
- Speaking : 11-14min

Paper-based IELTS



This test requires test takers to sit at a desk with the question papers and answer sheets for the Reading, Listening and Writing tests in an official IELTS test centre. Test takers will write their answers in either pen or HB-pencils. The Speaking test is carried out face-to-face with a trained IELTS examiner.

Computer-delivered IELTS



This test requires test takers to sit the Reading, Listening and Writing tests in front of a computer with the questions presented on the screen in an official IELTS test centre. The test takers then submit their answers through the use of a keyboard and a mouse. The Speaking test is not on computer and is carried out face-to-face with a trained IELTS examiner.

Bands in IELTS

IELTS Results are reported on a 9-Band Scale.

These results are designed to be simple and easy to understand. They are reported as band scores on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 9 (highest).

Let's take a look at the Bands and what score mean what proficiency.

Band Score	Skill	Description
9	Expert	The test taker has fully operational command of the language. Their use of English is appropriate, accurate and fluent, and shows complete understanding.
8	Very Good	The test taker has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriate usage. They may misunderstand some things in unfamiliar situations. They handle complex and detailed argumentation well.
7	Good	The test taker has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriate usage and misunderstandings in some situations. They generally handle complex language well and understand detailed reasoning.
6	Competent	The test taker has an effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriate usage and misunderstandings. They can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

5	Modest	The test taker has a partial command of the language and copes with overall meaning in most situations, although they are likely to make many mistakes. They should be able to handle basic communication in their own field.
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*Anything below this simply means your English sucks and you need to go back to School.
 Just kidding!*

Calculating the overall band score

A score is given for each test component – Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. These individual scores are then averaged and rounded to produce an overall band score.

IELTS results validity period

While it is up to each organization to set a validity period that works for their purposes, the IELTS partners recommend a 2-year validity period for IELTS test results based upon the well-documented phenomenon of second language loss or 'attrition'

IELTS scoring in detail

The IELTS Academic and General Training test results are reported using the same nine-band scale. The Test Report Form provides your Overall Band Score and band scores for each of the four components: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking.

Overall Band Score

The Overall Band Score is the average of the four component scores, rounded to the nearest whole or half band. The component scores are weighted equally.

Some examples:

	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Average of four components (total of the four individual component scores divided by four)	Band score
Test taker A	6.5	6.5	5	7	6.25	6.5
Test taker B	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	3.875	4.0
Test taker C	6.5	6.5	5.5	6.0	6.125	6.0

If the average of the four components ends in .25, the Overall Band Score is rounded up to the next half band, and if it ends in .75, the Overall Band Score is rounded up to the next whole band.

Component Band Scores

Listening

The IELTS Listening test contains 40 questions. Each correct answer is awarded one mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS nine-band scale. Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

Reading

The IELTS Reading test contains 40 questions. Each correct answer is awarded one mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS nine-band scale.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

The Academic and General Training Reading tests are graded on the same scale. The distinction between the two tests is one of genre or text type.

However, Academic Reading tests may contain texts which feature more difficult vocabulary or greater complexity of style. It is usual that a greater number of questions must be answered correctly on a General Training Reading test to secure a given band score.

The tables below indicate the average number of marks required to achieve a particular band score in Listening, Academic Reading and General Training Reading.

Listening

Band score	Raw score out of 40
5	16
6	23
7	30
8	35

Academic Reading

Band score	Raw score out of 40
5	15
6	23
7	30
8	35

Writing

Examiners use assessment criteria to award a band score for each of the four criteria:

- Task Achievement (for Task 1), Task Response (for Task 2)
- Coherence and Cohesion
- Lexical Resource
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy

The criteria are weighted equally and the score on the task is the average.

Speaking

Examiners use assessment criteria to award a band score for each of the four criteria:

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

The criteria are weighted equally and the Speaking band score is the average

Advantages of IELTS

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is popular worldwide with speakers of English as a second language as proof of their proficiency. IELTS is jointly owned and managed by the British Council, Cambridge English Language Assessment and IDP Education Australia. If you plan to enrol at a university or college, apply to business organisations, or register for a visa from government agencies in countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, or Canada, the IELTS test can help you reach your education, career or life goals.

Whether you are applying for study, work or a visa, the IELTS examination is the same in terms of content, examiners, format, level of difficulty and scoring. If your test results are not satisfactory, there is no limit on when and how often you can retake it, but it is advisable to take some time and study more before your next attempt. In most countries, test centres offer preparatory courses and language classes, but you can also find online learning resources that will help you refresh your knowledge and explain how best to prepare for the exam.

The Academic IELTS is required for university or college admission, while the General Training IELTS is intended for career and immigration purposes. The IELTS Life Skills is a new UK government-approved Secure English Language Test (SELT) to support your UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) application.

IELTS for study



If you are interested in studying abroad, remember that many universities worldwide and all universities and colleges in the UK accept IELTS test results. Tier 4 student visa applicants can apply to universities in the UK with an IELTS result from any of the 1,000 IELTS test locations worldwide, unless the institution has additional requirements. Some universities act as local agents on behalf of the British Council, ensuring the organisation and delivery of the IELTS examinations.

If you are considering an undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme, you should take the Academic IELTS test. The General Training IELTS test is sufficient for programmes which do not award a degree. Find your chosen college or university and check the version of IELTS that is right for you.

As a future international student, you will need to demonstrate that you are qualified and can successfully complete a degree programme taught in English. You will therefore need higher IELTS scores to enrol in advanced degree programmes such as Masters or PhDs

Some Interesting Facts about IELTS

IELTS is one, if not the most, important test done in order to test the skills a student has in English language. It's actually required by many institutions and companies over the U.S to start working or taking classes with them.

Most foreign people looking forward to have a job in the U.S or studying over there are currently studying English in order to pass this test because it's required in most places.

Let's take a look at some of the most interesting facts and clarify some myths regarding IELTS.

Native Speakers and Non-Native Speakers Have the Same Chance of Achieving IELTS Band 9

There's a common belief within students and teachers, saying that to achieve Band 9 (the highest score in IELTS) you must be a native English speaker. **This is nothing more than a myth.**

Actually, in some cases native speakers score less than non-native speakers. It all depends on your effort and how much dedication you put to the task of achieving a high score.

There's No Way to Cheat on the IELTS test

There's no way someone can cheat on the IELTS test. **How is this possible?** Well, easy. The questions you'll see on your test day aren't published anywhere else. Bringing

copies of past tests is obviously not allowed, but it wouldn't be of much help.

Lastly, if you were to cheat on the IELTS test, you'd be able to cheat on the written part of the test only, leaving the other 3 skills evaluated out of the picture.

People usually fail by thinking the IELTS is going to be like other English tests, ignoring that redaction skills, speaking and listening skills are of critical importance when taking the test. How can someone actually copy an entire essay when they don't even know the topic it's going to be about until the very last minute? Good luck with that!

Asking Your Examiner to Repeat the Question in the Speaking Part Won't Affect your IELTS Score

Many people believe asking the examiner to repeat one more time what they said is going to reduce their score in the test. This is a complete mistake because of this reason: the speaking part of the test does not test listening; it only tests your speaking skills.

Surely, understanding the question is very important in order to give a proper answer, but asking the examiner to repeat it because you didn't understand it at first is not going to affect your score in the speaking part.

That's also the reason why the accent used in the audio tapes played during the listening part are recorded in a very Standard English.

Using Difficult / Complex Words in the Writing Part Assures a Better IELTS Score

Being able to write like a professional and displaying your knowledge of English vocabulary are both very important parts of achieving a great score in the written part of the test.

Nevertheless, if you use many “complex” words that you’ve learned only for this purpose, it’s going to sound very unnatural for the examiner once he’s reading your test.

Sometimes, some words are used for very specific situations and even though they have the meaning you’re looking forward to give to them, in that context, is not natural or incorrect. This will affect your cohesion and coherence, and of course, your final score.

To pass the IELTS exam, you need to work on broad English skills; it doesn’t have to be specifically for the IELTS test.

If you’re used to writing error-free reports, essays or articles, and answer questions while having conversations with English speakers you’re most likely to do well.

However, it helps to be accustomed with the kind of exercises that you will have to go through.

What Are The Most COMMON MISTAKES Test-Takers Make?



- 1. Not answering the questions or changing the topic.** Especially in writing and speaking, this is a crucial mistake many test-takers make. They forget the questions and respond with something different than what was asked.
- 2. The length of writing has to be accurate.** Don't write more than what's been specified as it won't get you a better mark. Don't write less either. Practice a lot in advance so you will have a good grasp of what you're expected to write.
- 3. Don't memorise.** Some people think that memorising answers in writing or speaking will increase their chances of succeeding. This is false. You don't know what is going to be on the test, so memorising content is just a waste of time. The key is to be familiar with a range of topics so you can write and speak about them comfortably and without hesitation.
- 4. Not using linking words or being repetitive.** Plan your writing beforehand and make a list of words you want to use and have it next to your answer booklet so you can use them! Once you're done, read your

writing twice and try to find what can be improved.

5. Not being aware of the time you've spent on a task or the time left to complete it. Time management is probably 50% of your test success. If you stop talking in the speaking section or you can't finish reading the last part of the test, this will affect your score. It's recommended you answer everything you're confident you know and then you'll have some time to concentrate on tricky or problematic sections. This is particularly useful for the reading component of the test.

6. Losing focus during the listening section and freaking out when you don't understand what you hear. Thinking "I have to concentrate!" during the recording will only make you extremely anxious and then you'll end up totally distracted! Just imagine you're listening to your teacher during the class and take notes on the important subjects! This way you'll turn off the little worrying voices in your head.

What Are The Benefits Of Taking A Preparation Course?

Whether you are applying for an academic program or you are looking for another job abroad, the IELTS test offers great benefits to those who take it. In most cases, undertaking a preparation course for a few weeks or months can make the whole difference to your test results. There are some candidates who have not ever been tested and regardless of their advanced English levels, the IELTS test can surprise them.



Maybe your level is already pretty advanced and you aim to get a Band 7 or 8, however, if you lack time management skills or you haven't familiarised yourself with the questions types in the test, you might be surprised if your score is not as high as you expected. For many students, writing is the most complicated skill to master. For this specific skill, if you have a teacher who's constantly assigning you writing tasks and giving personalised feedback, your chances of achieving a better score increase significantly.

On the other hand, speaking is generally a skill that many international students underestimate, especially if they've lived abroad for a while. This is a very important skill to keep practicing guided by a professional who's able to correct more than your pronunciation. While in class, you are asked to practice a wide range of questions and you are given specific feedback.

Also, not only will you improve your performance on the test day, but also you'll enrich your vocabulary and you'll practice all the language skills needed to succeed!

Finally, studying with a specific goal will make you feel more motivated to succeed. This is extremely important when it comes to learning a language as it is a huge and on-going challenge. With an IELTS preparation course, your teacher and classmates will be there to make sure you stay motivated and achieve your desired score on the test day.

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