

IELTS

International English
Language Testing System

English for international opportunity

Information for candidates 2005



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

What is IELTS?

IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is designed to assess the language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is the language of communication.

IELTS is jointly managed by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL), British Council and IDP:IELTS Australia. IELTS conforms to the highest international standards of language assessment. It covers the four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking.

IELTS is recognised by universities and employers in many countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. It is also recognised by professional bodies, immigration authorities and other government agencies.

IELTS is not recommended for candidates under the age of 16.

Test Administration

IELTS tests are administered at centres throughout the world – there are nearly 300 centres, in over 100 countries. A full list of centres is available on the IELTS website: www.ielts.org

Most centres conduct a testing session at least once a month and more often at peak times. Please contact the relevant centre for exact test dates. Results are usually available within two weeks of the test. The candidate will receive only one copy of their test results but additional copies can be sent direct to receiving organisations.

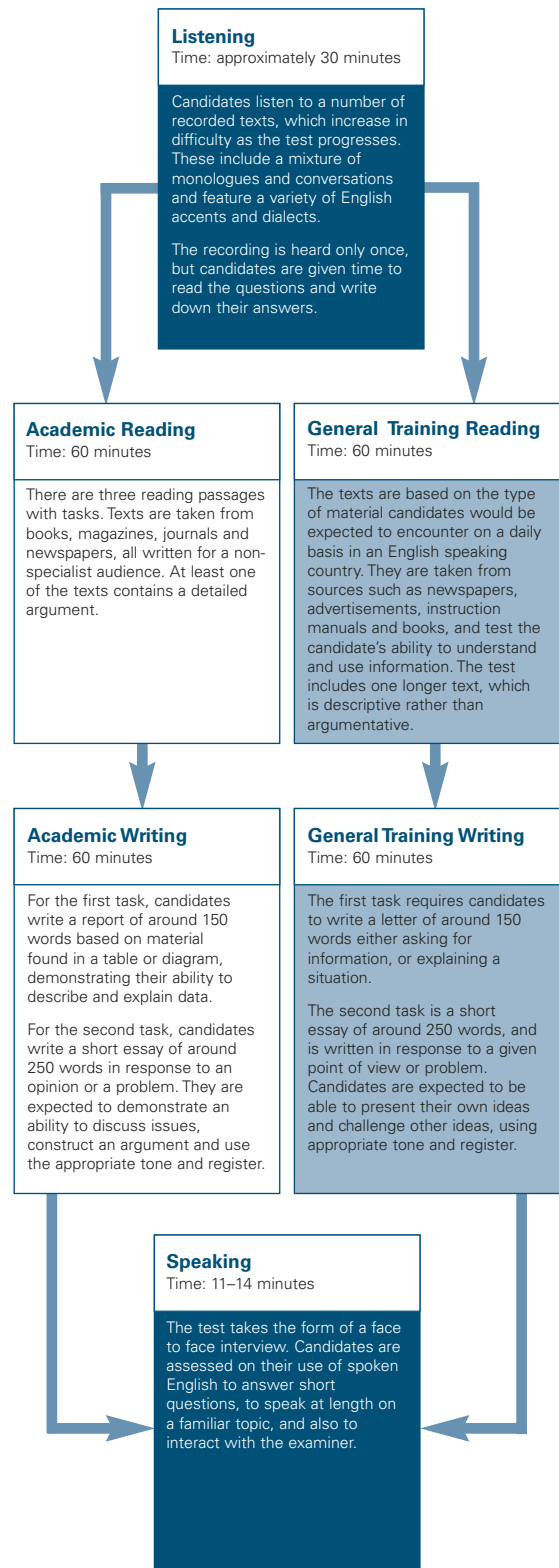
Candidates are not allowed to repeat the test within ninety days at any centre.

Academic and General Training

IELTS is available in two formats – Academic and General Training.

The Academic Modules assess whether a candidate is ready to study or train in the medium of English at an undergraduate or postgraduate level. Admission to undergraduate and postgraduate courses should be based on the results of these modules.

The General Training Modules emphasise basic survival skills in a broad social and educational context. General Training is suitable for candidates who are going to English speaking countries to complete their Secondary education, to undertake work experience or training programmes not at degree level, or for immigration purposes to Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The General Training module is not offered at all test administrations.



Test Format

Candidates are tested in listening, reading, writing and speaking. All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking Modules. There is a choice of Reading and Writing Modules – Academic or General Training. It is the responsibility of the candidate to tell the Administrator which version, Academic or General Training, they need to take.

The tests are designed to cover the full range of ability from non-user to expert user, with each module consisting of tasks of ascending levels of difficulty.

The first three modules – Listening, Reading and Writing – must be completed in one day. No break is given between the three modules. The Speaking Module may be taken, at the discretion of the test centre, in the period seven days before or after the other three modules.

Preparing for the test

It is not necessary to attend a preparation course but it is, of course, a good idea to prepare thoroughly for the test.

Official preparation materials called Specimen Materials are available from test centres, or directly from Cambridge ESOL or IDP:IELTS Australia. This includes a full practice test with an answer key and a CD of the listening test so that candidates can get some idea of their level and familiarise themselves with the format of the test.

There is also a wide range of published preparation materials.

IELTS Test Results

Results are issued by test centres within two weeks of the test. Test centres are not permitted to give results out over the phone nor by fax or e-mail.

A score is reported for each module of the test. The individual module scores are then averaged and rounded to produce an Overall Band Score. Overall Band Scores and Listening and Reading scores are reported in whole and half Bands; Writing and Speaking Band Scores are reported in whole Bands only.

The IELTS modules have been designed to reflect accurately the candidate's abilities to deal with the English language. The design of the test makes it statistically unlikely that there will be a great variation in the module scores. In order to ensure that a candidate's IELTS results genuinely reflect that candidate's English language abilities, where there are exceptionally unusual patterns of module scores the modules will be marked again, and the IELTS partners may ask the candidate to re-take some or all of the modules. The candidate will not be charged for any such re-takes and the candidate will not be issued with his/her result until after the re-take.

Test Report Form

The Test Report Form includes a large number of security features, and the authenticity of any Test Report Form can be verified through the online verification service. See www.ielts.org for further details. Cambridge ESOL, British Council and IDP:IELTS Australia reserve the right to cancel any IELTS Test Report Form in the event of any attempt to tamper with or misuse the information it contains.

As a general rule it is recommended that a Test Report Form that is more than two years old should only be accepted as evidence of present level of ability if accompanied by proof that a candidate has actively maintained or tried to improve their English language proficiency. Test Report Forms will not be issued for tests taken more than two years ago.

9 Expert user	Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
8 Very good user	Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
7 Good user	Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
6 Competent user	Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
5 Modest user	Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
4 Limited user	Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.
3 Extremely limited user	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
2 Intermittent user	No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
1 Non user	Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.
0 Did not attempt the test	No assessable information provided.

Test Modules

Each candidate takes four IELTS test modules, one in each of the four skills, listening, reading, writing and speaking.

>>> Listening

The Listening Module takes around 30 minutes. There are 40 questions. There are four sections. The Listening Module is recorded on CD and is played ONCE only.

During the test, time is given for candidates to read the questions and write down and then check their answers. Answers are written on the Question Paper as candidates listen. When the recording ends ten minutes are allowed for candidates to transfer their answers to an Answer Sheet.

The first two sections are concerned with social needs. There is a conversation between two speakers and then a monologue.

The final two sections are concerned with situations related more closely to educational or training contexts. There is a conversation between up to four people and then a further monologue.

A range of accents and dialects are used in the recordings which reflects the international usage of IELTS.

>>> Reading

The Reading Module takes 60 minutes. There are 40 questions, based on three reading passages with a total of 2,000 to 2,750 words. Both the Academic Reading and General Training Reading modules have the same format.

All answers must be entered on an Answer Sheet during the 60-minute test. No extra time is allowed for transferring answers.

Academic Reading

Texts are taken from magazines, journals, books, and newspapers. Texts have been written for a non-specialist audience.

At least one text contains a detailed logical argument. One text may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts contain technical terms then a simple glossary is provided.

General Training Reading

The first section, 'social survival', contains texts relevant to basic linguistic survival in English with tasks mainly about retrieving and providing general factual information.

'Training survival', the second section, focuses on the training context, for example on the training programme itself or on welfare needs. This section involves a text or texts of more complex language with some precise or elaborated expression.

The third section, 'general reading', involves reading more extended prose with a more complex structure but with the emphasis on descriptive and instructive rather than argumentative texts, in a general context relevant to the wide range of candidates involved.

SECTION 2 Questions 11–20

Questions 11–15

Choose the correct letters **A**, **B** or **C**.

- 11 The most important reason for a settlement at the Rocks was
- A fresh water.
 - B flat rock.
 - C a sea wall.
- 12 The plague was brought to Sydney by
- A rat-catchers.
 - B convicts.
 - C sailors.
- 13 The Harbour Bridge was built
- A in 10 years with 7 deaths.
 - B in 10 years with 17 deaths.
 - C in 17 years with 10 deaths.
- 14 The Chinese community arrived in the Rocks in
- A 1825.
 - B 1844.
 - C 1870.
- 15 The Chinese shops were mainly
- A restaurants and laundries.
 - B soap shops and general stores.
 - C general stores and laundries.

Questions 1–5

Complete the summary below using words from the box.

Write the correct answers in boxes 1–5 on your answer sheet.

Example

The **failure** during the late 1970s and early 1980s of an attempt to establish a widespread wind power industry in the United States resulted largely from the **1**..... in oil prices during this period. The industry is now experiencing a steady **2**..... due to improvements in technology and an increased awareness of the potential in the power of wind. The wind turbines that are now being made, based in part on the **3**..... of wide-ranging research in Europe, are easier to manufacture and maintain than their predecessors. This has led wind-turbine makers to be able to standardise and thus minimise **4**..... There has been growing **5**..... of the importance of wind power as an energy source.

criticism	success
design costs	production costs
failure	stability
operating costs	fall
growth	recognition
scepticism	decisions
effects	decline
	results

>>> Writing

The Writing Module takes 60 minutes. There are two tasks to complete. It is suggested that about 20 minutes is spent on Task 1 which requires candidates to write at least 150 words. Task 2 requires at least 250 words and should take about 40 minutes.

Answers must be given on the Answer Sheet and must be written in full. Notes are not acceptable as answers. Candidates should note that scripts under the required minimum word limit will be penalised.

Academic Writing

In Task 1 candidates are asked to describe some information (graph/table/chart/diagram), and to present the description in their own words. They may be asked to describe and explain data, describe the stages of a process, how something works or describe an object or event.

In Task 2 candidates are presented with a point of view or argument or problem.

Part of the task realisation is to respond appropriately in terms of register, rhetorical organisation, style and content. Appropriate responses are short essays.

General Training Writing

In Task 1 candidates are asked to respond to a given problem with a letter requesting information or explaining a situation.

In Task 2 candidates are presented with a point of view or argument or problem.

Part of the task realisation is to respond appropriately in terms of register, rhetorical organisation, style and content. Appropriate responses are personal, semi-formal or formal correspondence (Task 1) and short essays (Task 2).

>>> Speaking

The Speaking Module takes between 11 and 14 minutes and consists of an oral interview between the candidate and an examiner. All interviews are recorded.

In Part 1 candidates answer general questions about themselves, their homes/families, their jobs/studies, their interests, and a range of familiar topic areas. This part lasts between four and five minutes.

In Part 2 the candidate is given a verbal prompt on a card and is asked to talk on a particular topic. The candidate has one minute to prepare before speaking at length, for between one and two minutes. The examiner then asks one or two rounding-off questions.

In Part 3 the examiner and candidate engage in a discussion of more abstract issues and concepts which are thematically linked to the topic prompt in Part 2. The discussion lasts between four and five minutes.

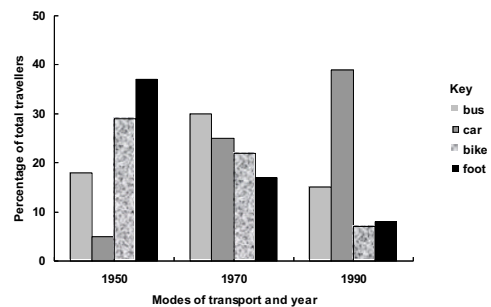
WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The chart below shows the different modes of transportation used to travel to and from work in one European city, in 1950, 1970 and 1990.

Write a report for a university lecturer describing the information below.

Write at least 150 words.



Academic Writing Task 1 (example)

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You rent a house through an agency. The heating system has stopped working. You phoned the agency a week ago but it has still not been repaired.

Write a letter to the agency. In your letter

- *introduce yourself*
- *explain the situation*
- *say what action you would like the agency to take*

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write your own address.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

General Training Writing Task 1 (example)

Questions and Answers

What help is available if you have special needs?

Test centres make every effort to cater for candidates with special needs, to enable them to best understand questions and tasks and to give their answers. It is our aim for the language level of all candidates, to be assessed fairly and objectively. In particular, arrangements can be made to help candidates with hearing, visual and/or specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia). Candidates should notify the centre of any special requirements when they apply. Any requests must be submitted at least 6 weeks before the desired test date. Full details of these arrangements are given on the IELTS website at www.ielts.org

What happens if you want to postpone or cancel your entry?

Candidates who request a postponement or cancellation of their test within 5 weeks of the test date will normally be charged the full fee unless they are able to provide appropriate medical evidence to support their request. Medical evidence must be provided within 5 days of the test date.

What happens if you are absent on the day of the test without giving prior notice?

Candidates will normally lose their full test fee unless they are able to provide appropriate medical evidence to the centre to explain their absence. Medical evidence must be provided within 5 days of the test date.

What happens if you do not transfer your listening or reading answers to the listening/reading answer sheet before the end of the module?

Candidates are reminded during the test to transfer their answers to the answer sheet. In the listening test 10 minutes is allocated specifically for this purpose. In the reading test candidates may transfer their answers at any time during the one hour test period. If candidates do not transfer their answers in the test

time they will not be given any extra time to do so. Responses provided on the question papers cannot be considered for marking purposes.

What can you do if you are unhappy with your results?

Candidates may apply for an enquiry on results procedure at the centre at which they took their test within four weeks of issue of results. The candidate's test material is re-marked. There is a fee for this which is refunded should the score on any module be increased.

How strictly is IELTS marked?

Candidates should take care when writing answers on the Listening and Reading Answer Sheets as incorrect spelling and grammar are penalised. Both UK and US varieties of spelling are acceptable.

If candidates are asked to write an answer using a certain number of words and/or (a) number(s), they will be penalised if they exceed or do not meet this requirement. For example if a question specifies an answer using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** and the correct answer is 'black leather coat', the answer 'coat of black leather' is incorrect.

In questions where candidates are expected to complete a gap, candidates should only transfer the necessary missing word(s) on to the Answer Sheet. For example if a candidate has to complete 'in the' and the correct answer is 'morning' the answer 'in the morning' would be incorrect.

Candidates should read and follow the instructions and questions very carefully. In Listening especially, care also should be taken when transferring answers on to the Answer Sheet.

IELTS Specimen Materials Order Form

Prices

United Kingdom – £9.10 per copy (including postage).
Overseas – £10.70 per copy (including postage).

Payment may be made by cheque (sterling only) drawn on a UK bank or a bank with a UK address, or by the following credit/debit cards – Visa, Mastercard, Delta, Switch, Eurocard. Cheques should be made payable to 'UCLES' and should be crossed A/C payee.

Send to: Cambridge ESOL Publications, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU, United Kingdom
Fax: +44 1223 553988

or

Australia – A\$33 per copy plus A\$11 postage (both inclusive of GST).
Overseas – A\$30 per copy plus postage (New Zealand A\$15, other overseas A\$20).
Payment may be made by crossed Australian dollar cheques, postal/international order, or by the following credit/debit cards – Visa, Mastercard, Delta, Switch, Eurocard. Cheques/postal orders should be made payable to 'IELTS Australia'.

Send to: IDP:IELTS Australia, IDP, GPO Box 2006, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia
Fax: +61 2 6285 3233

Please send copy/copies of the IELTS Specimen Materials (including CD):

Name

Delivery address

Country

Phone number

E-mail address

My payment by cheque/postal order/credit card is for £/\$

Start Date ____ / ____ / ____ Expiry Date ____ / ____ Switch Issue No ____

Card Number _____

Cardholder's Name _____

Signature

ENQUIRY

Contact nearest test centre to find out date of next test and to obtain an application form. The test centre has Specimen Materials for sale and these can also be bought directly from Cambridge ESOL or IELTS Australia using the order form at the end of this leaflet.

APPLICATION

You are not allowed to repeat the test within ninety days at any centre. If you do so your result from any such test will not be released and you will not receive a refund. Fill in the application form and send it or take it to the test centre with the test fee and two recent identical passport-sized photographs (not more than 6 months old). You need some evidence of identity. This must be **a passport or a National Identity Card with a number, a photograph, date of birth and signature.** You must bring the ID document indicated on the Application Form to the test. This is the only form of identity that will be accepted on the test day. The document must be valid, not expired, at registration and on the test day. Candidates taking the test outside their own country must present a passport. Candidates must enter the number of their passport or identity card on the application form.

CONFIRMATION

Test centre informs candidate of date and time of test. If the Speaking Module is to be on a different day, candidate is informed about this now.

DAY OF THE TEST

Each candidate must have the same evidence of identity as the number entered on the application form. No other forms of identification are acceptable. Candidates also need pencils and pens, a pencil sharpener, and an eraser, but must not take into the test room any bags, books, papers, cameras, mobile phones, tape recorders, pagers or any other electronic device.

Candidates are met by an IELTS Administrator who checks identification and makes sure candidates know where and when to go for the test. Candidates are assigned a place which they must keep for the Listening, Reading and Writing Modules.

Candidates are not allowed to leave the test room during any module.

All answers are entered on the Answer Sheets provided. Candidates can write on the Question Papers but cannot take them out of the room. On the Answer Sheets candidates indicate:

- **their name**
- **their candidate number**
- **the date**
- **their gender**
- **their first language**
- **whether Academic or General Training**

The Speaking Module is recorded.

RESULTS

Results are usually available within two weeks and Test Report Forms are sent by test centres to the candidates and to the sponsor(s)/receiving organisation(s). Test centres are not permitted to give results out over the phone nor by fax or e-mail.

www.ielts.org

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