

Cambridge IELTS 6

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University of Cambridge
ESOL Examinations:
English for Speakers
of Other Languages*

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Introduction

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is widely recognised as a reliable means of assessing the language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is the language of communication. These Practice Tests are designed to give future IELTS candidates an idea of whether their English is at the required level.

IELTS is owned by three partners: the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP: Education Australia (through its subsidiary company, IELTS Australia Pty Limited). Further information on IELTS can be found on the IELTS website (www.ielts.org).

WHAT IS THE TEST FORMAT?

IELTS consists of six modules. All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking modules. There is a choice of Reading and Writing modules according to whether a candidate is taking the Academic or General Training version of the test.

Academic For candidates taking the test for entry to undergraduate or postgraduate studies or for professional reasons.	General Training For candidates taking the test for entry to vocational or training programmes not at degree level, for admission to secondary schools and for immigration purposes.
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The test modules are taken in the following order:

Listening 4 sections, 40 items approximately 30 minutes		
Academic Reading 3 sections, 40 items 60 minutes	OR	General Training Reading 3 sections, 40 items 60 minutes
Academic Writing 2 tasks 60 minutes	OR	General Training Writing 2 tasks 60 minutes
Speaking 11 to 14 minutes		
Total Test Time 2 hours 44 minutes		

Listening

This module consists of four sections, each with ten questions. The first two sections are concerned with social needs. The first section is a conversation between two speakers and the second section is a monologue. The final two sections are concerned with situations related to educational or training contexts. The third section is a conversation between up to four people and the fourth section a monologue.

A variety of question types is used, including: multiple choice, short-answer questions, sentence completion, notes/form/table/summary/flow-chart completion, labelling a diagram/plan/map, classification, matching.

Candidates hear the recording once only and answer the questions as they listen. Ten minutes are allowed at the end for candidates to transfer their answers to the answer sheet.

Academic Reading

This module consists of three sections with 40 questions. There are three reading passages, which are taken from magazines, journals, books and newspapers. The passages are on topics of general interest. At least one passage contains detailed logical argument.

A variety of question types is used, including: multiple choice, short-answer questions, sentence completion, notes/summary/flow-chart/table completion, labelling a diagram, classification, matching, choosing suitable paragraph headings from a list, identification of writer's views/claims – *yes, no, not given* – or identification of information in the passage – *true, false, not given*.

General Training Reading

This module consists of three sections with 40 questions. The texts are taken from notices, advertisements, leaflets, newspapers, instruction manuals, books and magazines. The first section contains texts relevant to basic linguistic survival in English, with tasks mainly concerned with providing factual information. The second section focuses on the training context and involves texts of more complex language. The third section involves reading more extended texts, with a more complex structure, but with the emphasis on descriptive and instructive rather than argumentative texts.

A variety of question types is used, including: multiple choice, short-answer questions, sentence completion, notes/summary/flow-chart/table completion, labelling a diagram, classification, matching, choosing suitable paragraph headings from a list, identification of writer's views/claims – *yes, no, not given* – identification of information in the text – *true, false, not given*.

Academic Writing

This module consists of two tasks. It is suggested that candidates spend about 20 minutes on Task 1, which requires them to write at least 150 words, and 40 minutes on Task 2, which requires them to write at least 250 words. The assessment of Task 2 carries more weight in marking than Task 1.

Task 1 requires candidates to look at a diagram or some data (graph, table or chart) and to present the information in their own words. They are assessed on their ability to organise, present and possibly compare data, describe the stages of a process, describe an object or event, or explain how something works.

Introduction

In Task 2 candidates are presented with a point of view, argument or problem. They are assessed on their ability to present a solution to the problem, present and justify an opinion, compare and contrast evidence and opinions, and evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or arguments.

Candidates are also assessed on their ability to write in an appropriate style.

General Training Writing

This module consists of two tasks. It is suggested that candidates spend about 20 minutes on Task 1, which requires them to write at least 150 words, and 40 minutes on Task 2, which requires them to write at least 250 words. The assessment of Task 2 carries more weight in marking than Task 1.

In Task 1 candidates are asked to respond to a given problem with a letter requesting information or explaining a situation. They are assessed on their ability to engage in personal correspondence, elicit and provide general factual information, express needs, wants, likes and dislikes, express opinions, complaints, etc.

In Task 2 candidates are presented with a point of view, argument or problem. They are assessed on their ability to provide general factual information, outline a problem and present a solution, present and justify an opinion, and evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or arguments.

Candidates are also judged on their ability to write in an appropriate style. More information on assessing both the Academic and General Training Writing modules, including Writing Band Descriptors (public version), is available on the IELTS website.

Speaking

This module takes between 11 and 14 minutes and is conducted by a trained examiner.

There are three parts:

Part 1

The candidate and the examiner introduce themselves. Candidates then answer general questions about themselves, their home/family, their job/studies, their interests and a wide range of similar familiar topic areas. This part lasts between four and five minutes.

Part 2

The candidate is given a task card with prompts and is asked to talk on a particular topic. The candidate has one minute to prepare and they can make some notes if they wish, before speaking for between one and two minutes. The examiner then asks one or two rounding-off questions.

Part 3

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

The Speaking module assesses whether candidates can communicate effectively in English. The assessment takes into account Fluency and Coherence, Lexical Resource, Grammatical

Range and Accuracy, and Pronunciation. More information on assessing the Speaking module, including Speaking Band Descriptors (public version), is available on the IELTS website.

HOW IS IELTS SCORED?

IELTS results are reported on a nine-band scale. In addition to the score for overall language ability, IELTS provides a score in the form of a profile for each of the four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking). These scores are also reported on a nine-band scale. All scores are recorded on the Test Report Form along with details of the candidate's nationality, first language and date of birth. Each Overall Band Score corresponds to a descriptive statement which gives a summary of the English language ability of a candidate classified at that level. The nine bands and their descriptive statements are as follows:

- 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.

Most universities and colleges in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA accept an IELTS Overall Band Score of 6.0–7.0 for entry to academic programmes.

MARKING THE PRACTICE TESTS

Listening and Reading

The Answer key is on pages 151–160.

Each question in the Listening and Reading modules is worth one mark.

Questions which require letter/Roman numeral answers

- For questions where the answers are letters or numbers, you should write *only* the number of answers required. For example, if the answer is a single letter or number you should write *only one* answer. If you have written more letters or numerals than are required, the answer must be marked wrong.

Questions which require answers in the form of words or numbers

- Answers may be written in upper or lower case.
- Words in brackets are *optional* – they are correct, but not necessary.
- Alternative answers are separated by a slash (/).
- If you are asked to write an answer using a certain number of words and/or (a) number(s), you will be penalised if you exceed this. For example, if a question specifies an answer using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** and the correct answer is 'black leather coat', the answer of 'coat of black leather' is *incorrect*.
- In questions where you are expected to complete a gap, you should transfer *only* the necessary missing word(s) onto the answer sheet. For example, to complete 'in the . . .', and the correct answer is 'morning', the answer 'in the morning' would be *incorrect*.
- All answers require correct spelling (including words in brackets).
- Both US and UK spelling are acceptable and are included in the Answer key.
- All standard alternatives for numbers, dates and currencies are acceptable.
- All standard abbreviations are acceptable.
- You will find additional notes about individual questions in the Answer key.

Writing

It is not possible for you to give yourself a mark for the Writing tasks. For *Task 1* in *Tests 1* and *3*, and *Task 2* in *Tests 2* and *4*, and for *Task 1* in *General Training Test A* and *Task 2* in *General Training Test B*, we have provided *model answers* (written by an examiner) at the back of the book. It is important to note that these show just one way of completing the task, out of many possible approaches. For *Task 2* in *Tests 1* and *3*, *Task 1* in *Tests 2* and *4* and for *Task 2* in *General Training Test A* and *Task 1* in *General Training Test B*, we have provided *sample answers* (written by candidates), showing their score and the examiner's comments. These model answers and sample answers will give you an insight into what is required for the Writing module.

HOW SHOULD YOU INTERPRET YOUR SCORES?

In the Answer key at the end of each set of Listening and Reading answers you will find a chart which will help you assess whether, on the basis of your Practice Test results, you are ready to take the IELTS test.

In interpreting your score, there are a number of points you should bear in mind. Your performance in the real IELTS test will be reported in two ways: there will be a Band Score from 1 to 9 for each of the modules and an Overall Band Score from 1 to 9, which is the average of your scores in the four modules. However, institutions considering your application are advised to look at both the Overall Band and the Bands for each module in order to determine whether you have the language skills needed for a particular course of study. For example, if your course has a lot of reading and writing, but no lectures, listening skills might be less important and a score of 5 in Listening might be acceptable if the Overall Band Score was 7. However, for a course which has lots of lectures and spoken instructions, a score of 5 in Listening might be unacceptable even though the Overall Band Score was 7.

Once you have marked your tests you should have some idea of whether your listening and reading skills are good enough for you to try the IELTS test. If you did well enough in one module but not in others, you will have to decide for yourself whether you are ready to take the test.

The Practice Tests have been checked to ensure that they are of approximately the same level of difficulty as the real IELTS test. However, we cannot guarantee that your score in the Practice Tests will be reflected in the real IELTS test. The Practice Tests can only give you an idea of your possible future performance and it is ultimately up to you to make decisions based on your score.

Different institutions accept different IELTS scores for different types of courses. We have based our recommendations on the average scores which the majority of institutions accept. The institution to which you are applying may, of course, require a higher or lower score than most other institutions.

Sample answers and model answers are provided for the Writing tasks. The sample answers were written by IELTS candidates; each answer has been given a band score and the candidate's performance is described. Please note that there are many different ways by which a candidate may achieve a particular band score. The model answers were written by an examiner as examples of very good answers, but it is important to understand that they are just one example out of many possible approaches.

Further information

For more information about IELTS or any other University of Cambridge ESOL examination write to:

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 1223 553355
Fax: +44 1223 460278
e-mail: Esolhelpdesk@CambridgeEsol.org
<http://www.cambridgeesol.org>
<http://www.ielts.org>

Test 1

LISTENING

SECTION 1 Questions 1–10

Questions 1–4

Complete the notes below.

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

Notes on sports club	
<i>Example</i>	<i>Answer</i>
Name of club:	<u>Kingswell</u>
Facilities available:	Golf
	1
	2
Classes available:	• Kick-boxing
	• 3
Additional facility:	4 (restaurant opening soon)