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# IELTS TRAINER

**SIX PRACTICE TESTS  
WITHOUT ANSWERS**



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## Introduction

### What is IELTS?

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is widely recognised as a test of language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is the language of communication.

There are two types of IELTS test: the Academic Module (taken for entry to undergraduate or postgraduate studies or for professional reasons) and the General Training Module (taken for entry to vocational or training programmes not at degree level, for admission to secondary schools and for immigration purposes). Both modules are made up of four parts – Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. The Listening and Speaking tests are the same for both Academic and General Training but the Reading and Writing tests are different.

### Who is *IELTS Trainer* for?

This book is suitable for anyone who is preparing to take the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic Module. *IELTS Trainer* can be used in class with a teacher, or – in the case of the with-answers edition of the book – by students working on their own at home. It is aimed at candidates who would like to achieve a Band Score of 6 or higher. (See section on Scoring below.)

### What is *IELTS Trainer*?

This book contains six practice tests for IELTS, each covering the Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking papers. The practice tests in Guided Tests 1 and 2 are also accompanied by training and advice. All six tests are at the level of the exam.

In Test 1 each part of each paper consists of a training section and an exam practice section:

- The training sections have information and exercises to help you prepare for each part of the paper. In the Listening, Writing and Speaking papers, Test 1

presents and practises grammar, vocabulary and functional language relevant to those papers. This is supported by work on correcting common errors made by IELTS candidates in the exam, as shown by the Cambridge Learner Corpus (see below). In Writing, there are extracts from the scripts of IELTS candidates as well as model answers.

- The exam practice sections consist of the test itself accompanied by step-by-step guidance for each task with tips on strategy and advice linked to the questions. There is a wide range of tasks in the IELTS Listening and Reading papers and the same task may not always appear in the same part of the exam every time. The practice tests reflect this variety and training is given in Tests 1 and 2 in all the major task types which you will come across.


Test 2 contains training for the exam focusing on the task types not covered in Test 1, in addition to a review of information in Test 1. The training sections are shorter in Test 2 than in Test 1. Test 2 also contains an exam practice section with tips and advice on how to deal with the practice test itself.

Tests 3–6 are complete practice tests without advice or training. They contain variations of the task types in Tests 1 and 2 and cover a wide range of topics and text types. They give you the opportunity to practise the strategies and skills you have acquired while working through Tests 1 and 2.

There is an Explanatory answer key (see below) for each test in the with-answers edition.

## How to use *IELTS Trainer*

### Test 1 Training

- For each part of the paper (e.g. Listening Section 1, page 10), first read the overview **What is ...?**, describing the type(s) of task which that part may contain. For some parts there is also a section called **What does it test?** which describes, for example, the kind of skills that part of the exam tests (e.g. identifying key facts, understanding speakers' opinions).
- Read through the **Task information** which describes in detail the particular task type that follows.
- Look at the information marked **Tip!** which gives general advice on exam strategy and language.
- Work through **Useful language** exercises in the Listening, Writing and Speaking sections before tackling the exam tasks on the practice pages. These training exercises help to develop the necessary skills and offer practice directly relevant to the exam tasks in Test 1. Answers to the exercises are in the **Explanatory answer key** (see below). Many exercises involve focusing on and correcting common language mistakes made by actual IELTS candidates, as shown by the **Cambridge Learner Corpus** (see below).
- Check the boxes marked **Advice**. These give practical help with individual questions.
- In **Listening**, use one of the numbered **CDs**, e.g. . A CD player (or a computer that plays CDs) is required.
- In Test 1 **Writing**, many exercises are based on language used in IELTS essays in the **Cambridge Learner Corpus** and sample answers written by actual IELTS candidates, as well as model answers which show what is expected of the best candidates. The **Explanatory answer key** contains answers to the exercises. These training exercises build up to an exam task at the end which is similar to, but not the same as, those in the training exercises.
- In **Speaking**, there are exercises which build into a bank of personalised, useful language for the first part of the test and other exercises which practise the language necessary for the prepared talk and discussion which follow in Parts 2 and 3. These can be used with a partner, or working alone, for timed practice.

### Test 1 Exam practice

- Read the **Action plan** for each task in the Listening, Reading and Writing papers immediately before working through the exam practice task. There are many different task types and the Action plans show how to approach each type in the best way to achieve good marks and avoid wasting time.
- Work through the task, carefully following the steps of the Action plan and making use of the help in the **Tip!** information and **Advice** boxes.
- Answers to all items are in the **Explanatory answer key**, which explains why the correct answers are right and others are wrong. For Listening, the parts of the **Transcripts** which give the correct answers are underlined.

### Test 2 Training

- Answer the questions in the **Review** section to remind yourself about each part of the test. If you need to, use the cross-reference to Test 1 to check your answers.
- Work through the exercises in the Writing and Speaking sections. The Speaking section extends the strategies and skills introduced in Test 1 and adds to the topics which you might be asked about. The Writing section revises the strategies covered in Test 1 and offers further targeted language training exercises. Many of the exercises are based on IELTS candidates' answers from the Cambridge Learner Corpus.

### Test 2 Exam practice

- Answer the questions in each **Action plan reminder**. These ask you about strategies which were introduced in Test 1. Use the cross-reference to refer back to Test 1 if you need to.
- Read through the **Action plans** for the new task types which weren't in Test 1. Use the **Tip!** information and **Advice** boxes to help you do the tasks and the **Explanatory answer key** to check your answers.

### Tests 3–6 Exam practice

- Try to do the exam tasks under exam conditions where possible, applying the skills and language learnt in Guided Tests 1 and 2.


- For the Speaking paper, it is better to work with a partner so that you can ask each other the questions. If that is not possible, follow the instructions and do all three parts alone. Use a watch and keep to the correct time. Recording the test and listening to it can help you identify language areas which need more practice.

You can do Tests 3–6 in any order, but you should always try to keep to the time recommended for each paper.




### The Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC)

The Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC) is a large collection of exam scripts written by students taking Cambridge ESOL English exams around the world. It currently contains over 85,000 scripts and is growing all the time. It forms part of the Cambridge International Corpus (CIC) and it has been built up by Cambridge University Press and Cambridge ESOL. The CLC currently contains scripts from over:

- 85,000 students
- 100 different first languages
- 180 different countries

Exercises and extracts from candidates' answers from Writing in *IELTS Trainer* which are based on the CLC are indicated by this icon: 

### Other components of *IELTS Trainer*

- The **Explanatory answer key** on pages 173–231 of the with-answers edition gives the correct answers, and explains them where necessary (especially in Tests 1 and 2). In some cases, such as multiple-choice questions, it also explains why the other possible answers are wrong.
- The full **Transcripts** for the Listening paper are given in the with-answers edition, with the parts of the transcript that give the correct answers underlined.
- **Answer sheets** for the Reading and Listening papers are at the back of the book. Before you take the exam, you should study these so that you know how to mark or write your answers correctly. In Writing, the question paper has plenty of lined space for you to write your answers.
- **3 audio CDs** contain recordings for the Listening papers of the six IELTS tests. The listening material is indicated by a different icon in *IELTS Trainer* for each of the CDs:   

## International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

### Level of IELTS

You do not pass or fail IELTS. You get a Band Score between 1 and 9. Candidates scoring 9 have fluent, accurate English, with wide-ranging vocabulary, making very few errors and will be capable of performing in English in professional and academic contexts. Candidates scoring 7 can understand and communicate effectively in English, using some complex language, and although there may be errors, these do not impede communication. A score of 5 or lower means that the candidate has a limited range of language and that errors in grammar, pronunciation, etc. lead to misunderstandings.

Different organisations and institutions publish the Band Score they require for entry.

### Scoring

The **Listening Test** contains 40 items and each correct item is given one mark.

The **Reading Test** contains 40 items and each correct item is given one mark. The Academic and General Training Reading Tests are graded to the same level. However, because the texts in the Academic Reading Test are more challenging overall than those in the General Training Test, more questions need to be answered correctly on a General Training Test to receive the same grade.

The **Writing Test** (both Academic and General Training) is marked on the following areas: Task Achievement (for Task 1), Task Response (for Task 2), Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy. Examiners give a Band Score for each of these criteria, which are equally weighted.

For the **Speaking Test**, a Band Score is given for each of the following which are equally weighted: Fluency and Coherence, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Pronunciation.

Candidates receive scores on a Band Scale from 1 to 9 for each skill tested (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking). They are of equal importance. These four scores are then averaged and rounded to produce an Overall Band Score. Each candidate receives a Test Report Form setting out their Overall Band Score and



their scores for each test. The scores are reported in whole bands or half bands according to the nine-band score given below.

If you do the practice tests in *IELTS Trainer* under exam conditions, you need to score approximately 20 marks on both the Reading and Listening Test for a Band Score of around 5.5. To achieve a Band Score of 7, you need approximately 30 marks on Reading and Listening.

### IELTS Band Scores

**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.

For more information on grading and results, go to the Cambridge ESOL website (see below).

### Content of IELTS

IELTS has four papers, each consisting of 2, 3 or 4 parts. For details on each part, see the tables below.

#### **Paper 1 Listening about 30 minutes, with 10 minutes to transfer answers to the answer sheet at the end**

- This paper is common to both the Academic and General Training Modules.
- The topics in Parts 1 and 2 are based around social situations but the topics in Parts 3 and 4 are all in an educational or training context.
- The **level of difficulty** increases from Section 1 to Section 4.
- Each section is heard **once only**.
- The **instructions** for each task are on the question paper.
- There is a short **pause** before each section which can be used to look at the task and questions. Where there is more than one task in a section, there is also a short pause before the part of the recording which relates to the next task.
- A brief introductory explanation of the **context** is heard before each section, but is **not** printed on the question paper.
- **At the end** of the Listening test there are ten minutes to copy answers onto the answer sheet.
- Correct **spelling** is essential on the answer sheet.

	No. of questions	Text type	Task types <i>Each section has one or more of these tasks.</i>	Task information
1	10	a conversation or interview between two speakers, giving and exchanging information about an everyday topic	completing notes completing a form completing a table	pages 10, 67 page 61 pages 21, 62
2	10	a monologue (sometimes introduced by another speaker) giving information on an everyday topic, e.g. a radio programme or talk from a guide	completing sentences completing a flow-chart	page 68 page 17
3	10	a conversation between two, three or four speakers in an educational or training context	labelling a map labelling a diagram	page 64 page 17
4	10	a monologue in an academic setting, e.g. a lecture or presentation	matching multiple choice	pages 14, 66 pages 14, 63, 65

### Paper 2 Academic Reading 1 hour

- This paper is only taken in the Academic Module. There is a different paper for candidates taking the General Training Module (see Cambridge ESOL website). Both papers follow the same format but the kinds of texts on the two modules differ in terms of topic, genre, complexity of language and style.
- There are approximately 2,750 words in total in the three passages.

Passage	No. of questions	Text types	Task types <i>Each section has one or more of these tasks.</i>	Task information
1	13 (two or three tasks)	Texts may be from books, journals, magazines, newspapers or websites. They are suitable for reading by undergraduate or postgraduate students but are of general interest, not only for subject specialists.	multiple choice matching	pages 34, 76, 80 pages 28, 34, 73, 82
2	13 (three tasks)		choosing True/False/Not given	pages 23, 71
3	14 (three tasks)		choosing Yes/No/Not given locating information completing notes, a table, or a flow-chart completing a summary or sentences labelling a diagram	pages 34, 81 page 28 pages 23, 72 pages 28, 77 page 23



### Paper 3 Academic Writing 1 hour

This paper is only taken in the Academic Module. There is a different paper for candidates taking the General Training Module (see Cambridge ESOL website).

Task	Suggested time and marks	Task text type and no. of words	Task information
1	20 minutes one-third of the marks for the paper	a summary of information given in a graph, chart, table or diagram 150 words minimum	pages 40, 87
2	40 minutes two-thirds of the marks for the paper	a discussion essay in response to a statement of opinion or ideas 250 words minimum	pages 48, 90

### Paper 4 Speaking 11–14 minutes

This paper is common to both the Academic and General Training Modules.

It is a face-to-face interview with an examiner and it is recorded.

Part	Time	Task type	Task information
1	4–5 minutes	giving personal information and discussing everyday subjects	pages 55, 91
2	1 minute preparation 2 minutes talk	giving a prepared talk on a subject given by the examiner and answering one or two follow-up questions	pages 57, 92
3	4–5 minutes	a discussion with the examiner arising from the topic of Part 2, offering the opportunity to discuss more abstract issues and ideas	pages 59, 94

### Further information

The information about IELTS contained in *IELTS Trainer* is designed to be an overview of the exam. For a full description of IELTS, including information about task types, testing focus and preparation for the exam, please see the *IELTS Handbook*, which can be obtained from Cambridge ESOL at the address below or from the website at: [www.CambridgeESOL.org](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org).

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