

The Complete Guide to the IELTS[®] International English Language Testing System[®]



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A full-length sample test for Listening, Reading and Writing with answers



Exercises to improve your levels of grammar and vocabulary



Online and downloadable MP3 files to work on your Listening comprehension skills

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Task Type 4 & 5	Sentence Completion and Short Answer Questions	Skills: Linking words Skills: Tips and strategies Exam practice Mini test
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Reading

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Sample test

Chapters	Features	Chapters	Features
Listening Test	All four sections 40 questions A variety of Task Types	General Reading	All three sections 40 questions A Variety of Task Types
Academic Reading	All three sections 40 questions A variety of Task Types	Academic Writing	Task 1 and Task 2 Model Answers
		General Writing	Task 1 and Task 2 Model Answers

GUIDE TO THE IELTS® TEST

Who is the IELTS® Test designed for?

There are two versions of the test: The IELTS® Academic and the IELTS® General Training. The Academic Test is designed for people who want to apply for higher education in an English-speaking country. The General Test is for people looking to emigrate to Canada, Australia, New Zealand or the UK.

Are the two tests completely different?

The Listening and the Speaking Tests are the same for both versions. The Reading and Writing have different versions but use the same types of questions. This book deals with both versions of the test and those, for example, who wish to take the Academic version will still benefit from practising on the questions from the General Test.

What level do I need to pass the IELTS® Test?

The IELTS® is not a 'pass' / 'fail' test. It gives you a level, which may be high enough for you to enter a university or apply for a visa to an English-speaking country or not. If you have a good proficiency of all four skills of English, you should expect to score well on the test.

How is the IELTS® Test graded?

The IELTS® results are reported on a 9 band scale, with 9 being the highest and 0 being the lowest. You will be given a band for each of the four skills, and your overall score is an average of the four bands.

What is considered a good band?

A good IELTS® score is one that reflects your level of English. However, as an example, to enter Oxford University, you will need an overall band of 7.0 with at least 7.0 in each of the four skills. To apply for a visa to work in Australia, you will need an overall band score of 7.0.

How long is the test?

The total test time is 2 hours and 45 minutes. The components are:

Listening	30 minutes (plus ten minutes to transfer the answers to the answer sheet)
Reading	60 minutes (for both the Academic and the General versions)
Writing	60 minutes (for both the Academic and the General versions)
Speaking	11-14 minutes

The Listening, Reading and Writing Tests must all be taken on the same day with no breaks between each section. The Speaking Test can be taken on a different day.

Can I take notes during the Listening and Reading Tests?

You are actively encouraged to take notes in all four parts of the test. In Listening, as mentioned, you will be given extra time to transfer your answers to the official IELTS® answer sheet. In other words, it is strongly recommended that you take notes as you listen and report them to the answer sheet later.

In the Reading section, you will not have extra time to transfer your answers, but you can still underline, take notes or cross out answers that you have already used. The only thing to keep in mind is that it is the answers on the answer sheet that count, not the notes that you take on the test paper.

For the Writing and Speaking Tests, you can also take notes. In Writing, we recommend that you draw up a plan of what you are going to write so that you have a fixed structure before you begin. In Speaking, you will be given a piece of paper and a pencil to prepare for Part 2. You will not be able to keep this. The examiner will take it back from you after you complete Part 2.

What should I do if I don't know an answer?

As far as possible, you should put an answer to every question even if you have to guess. Some of the questions simply require A, B, C or D. For other questions, you will have to write one, two or three words. There are no penalty points for incorrect answers. If you try, you might find that you choose the correct answer.

Do I have to do the questions in a particular order?

You must begin with Listening, followed by Reading, then Writing, then Speaking. This is non-negotiable. In the Listening section, the answers will generally come in the same order as they appear on the recording. However, for Reading, you have one hour to do 40 questions in total autonomy. You may do the questions in any order you choose as long as you give yourself time to put an answer to every question within 60 minutes.

For the Writing Test, there are two tasks named Task 1 and Task 2. It is recommended that you spend 20 minutes on Task 1 and then 40 minutes on Task 2. If you prefer to begin with Task 2 or if you want to split your time differently, you can. The only requirement is to write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2.

How long is my IELTS® score valid?

The length of validity of an IELTS® score is decided by the organisation that uses the test, not by Cambridge. However, as with most other level tests, you should assume that it will be valid for no more than 2 years. After that, a level in a foreign language can decline if you are not sufficiently exposed to it.

Why do I need to prepare for the IELTS® Test?

Preparing for the IELTS® Test will not guarantee you a perfect score on the test, but it will help you to feel prepared and know what you have to do for each exercise on the test and give you some tips on how to find the right answer when you do not see it immediately.

What should I do if I'm not happy with my score?

There are no shortcuts or magic answers for improving your English. If you do not get the band that you require, you will need to take lessons, spend some time in an English-speaking country and work hard to take your English to a higher level. Then you can try to take the test again.

**LISTENING
TEST**

LISTENING TEST

Introduction

The IELTS® Test begins with the Listening Test, which consists of four sections. The total time for the Listening Test is approximately 30 minutes. At the end, you will be given an extra 10 minutes to transfer your answers onto the official IELTS® answer sheet. It is important to make sure you write the answers to the right questions. It is only the answers on the answer sheet that will be taken into account. The notes you have written on your test book will not be consulted.

How is the Listening Test graded?

Each section has a total of ten questions and each question is worth one point, so the maximum score on the Listening Test is 40 and the minimum score is 0. The test is progressive, so the questions for Section 1 should be the easiest and the questions for Section 4 should be the most difficult, but each question has an equal value.

What types of questions are there?

Some of the questions will be multiple choice, where you will simply have to answer by choosing A, B or C. For other questions, you will have to write the answers. This will never be more than two or three words but these words must be both grammatically correct and spelled correctly. If your comprehension is good but your spelling is not, you will not be awarded any points. There are no half marks for the IELTS® Test questions.

Section 1

Section 1 will be always be a conversation between two people, generally a man and a woman, in an everyday situation, talking about holidays, eating out, sports, health, etc.

Section 2

In Section 2, you will hear a single speaker in an everyday situation, such as a tour guide, a radio programme or an announcement.

Section 3

For Section 3, there will a conversation between three or four people in a study situation, for example three students talking together or two students talking to a lecturer.

Section 4

In the final section, you will listen to a lecture on an academic subject such as biology, geology, history or archaeology.

The Task Types

There are many different types of questions that you can be asked on the Listening Test, which the IELTS® refers to as Task Types. There is no one type of question for Section 1 or Section 2. These Task Types can be used in any or all of the sections of the test, although some will be more common in some sections. The main Task Types are:

Form Completion

This can in fact be a form, some notes, a table or a flow chart. You will listen to a talk or conversation and, based on the information you hear, you will have to fill in the gaps.

Multiple Choice Questions

Each talk or conversation will be followed by a series of questions, and you will have to answer these questions by choosing A, B or C. There is always one clear, correct answer and two clearly incorrect answers.

Matching

Based on what you hear, you will need to match a set of statements numbered, for example, 1 – 5, to a list of options labelled, for example, A – E. There are different variations of this type of question, sometimes with one letter being used more than once.

Short Answer Questions

You will see a series of questions about the talk or conversation, but instead of writing full sentences to answer the questions, you will be required to give an answer of one, two or three words, depending on the instructions.

Sentence Completion

Based on what you hear in the recording, you will have to complete a series of sentences. You will have to pay attention to the grammar in the sentence to add the missing one, two or three words.

Plan, Map and Diagram labelling

For each conversation or talk, you will see a plan of a building, a map of a town or a diagram of a machine or a factory with some labels missing. By using the information in the recording, you should fill in the labels. Sometimes you will be given a list of options to match to these labels.

How will I know what to do?

For every question, there are instructions. Pay careful attention to these. They will tell you how to answer, how many words to use or how many times you can use an answer. If you do not follow these instructions, you will lose points.

How should I use this section of the book?

Each chapter of this section deals with one of the Task Types, with examples for all four sections of the test. The chapters begin with a fuller description of each Task Type, some of which have several variations, followed by an example usually from Section 1.

After, you will have some IELTS® skills, which will give you useful vocabulary, points of grammar and tips and strategies that you can use to help to improve your IELTS® score. At the end of each chapter, there is a mini test from one of the sections with all ten questions of one Task Type.

At the back of the book, you can find a full-length Sample Test, which will use a variety of the Task Types presented in these chapters. Once you have finished these chapters, you should be ready to try the Sample Test, after which you should be ready to take your IELTS® Test.

Introduction

There are four sections to the Listening Test with ten questions each, but unlike other tests, there is not a separate activity for each part. Instead, there are six different Task Types which can be used in all four sections. Therefore, this first chapter will not deal with Section 1 of the Listening Test but with one type of listening task. On the real test, you may find that you have to deal with all of the Task Types or only a few of them. You may also find that a particular Task Type is used, for example, in Section 1 and Section 3.

Form Completion

One of the most common tasks on the Listening Test is 'Form Completion'. This can be used for questions on all four sections of the Listening Test, and you may have to supply missing information on forms as well as notes, tables or flow charts.

You will be required to listen to the information given in the conversation or talk to fill in the missing elements. The information can take many forms, such as names, telephone numbers, measurements, prices or items. You will not need to change or interpret the words in the recording. You simply have to identify them and write them in the appropriate place on the form.

However, be warned that you will only hear the recording once. Nothing is ever repeated on the IELTS® Test, and once the recording has started, it is not possible to stop, pause or rewind it. On the other hand, in some sections, you will be given time to look at the form to see what information is required before the recording begins.

These activities will often be accompanied by an instruction such as 'NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. This instruction must be followed to the letter as any answers that contain more words or numbers will be considered incorrect.

The information asked for will be the main points of the conversation or talk. In other words, it is the details that you would be expected to remember from a normal conversation. You will not have to infer anything from the talk or interpret the intentions of one or more of the speakers.

While you listen, you may write the answers directly onto the form. You will be given ten minutes at the end of the test to transfer them onto the answer sheet. It is only the answers on the official IELTS® answer sheet that will be taken into consideration, so pay careful attention to the correct answer choices you make on the answer sheet and make sure that you spell the words correctly.

Now consider the example on the next page, which consists of a Form Completion task for Section 1 of the Listening Test.

EXAMPLE

SECTION 1



✓ Questions 1 – 8

Complete the form below.

Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER for each question.

Open Bank – Customer application form

Type of account: Current

Name: Tom (1)

Address: (2) Victoria Avenue

Town/City: Canterbury

Postcode: (3) CT1

Landline: 0227 22 44 67

Mobile: (4) 107 216

Account: Premium with (5) interest.

Appointment: Wednesday (6) 11:00

Documents to be given:

ID: driver's licence or (7)

Proof of address: (8) or phone bill

Received by Faye Smith, Monday 12th March, 4:30

IELTS SKILLS 1: STRATEGIES FOR FORM COMPLETION

The answers are chronological

The answers always follow the same chronology as the conversation. So the first gap on the form will be at the beginning of the conversation, and the information for the last gap will be at the end. For some sections, you will be allowed some time to look at the form before you listen, but you can always use the information that is given on the form to help to guide you through the dialogue.

Always put an answer

You will not be penalised for putting an incorrect answer. There are no minus points on the IELTS®. So, if at all possible, put an answer to every question. Of course, for some information like names or addresses, if you didn't understand or if you missed the information, then it won't be possible to guess the answer. However, for dates, times or other information, it is acceptable to guess. Consider the following example:

Crompton Recycling Centre

Glass: Broken glasses

1.

2.

Please separate 3., brown and 4. glass.

In this example, we maybe have an idea of the answers before we listen since we all have experience of recycling glass before. Answers 1. and 2. will be glass products and answers 3. and 4. will be colours. Even if we don't hear the answers, it will be possible to put something.

✓ Now Play Track 2 to see if your guesses were correct.



PLAY TRACK
2

Spelling is important

Unfortunately, on the IELTS®, it is not enough to hear the right words. You must also spell them correctly. If, for example, in the above example, you heard the word 'clear' for question 3 but wrote it 'cleer', you will receive no point for this question. In the case of complicated names and streets, the speakers will always spell them, but for other words, it is important to know how to write them without mistakes. For words which can be spelled differently in the UK and the US such as 'centre' (UK) and 'center' (US), both spellings are accepted.

Respect the word limit

It is always clearly stated at the top of each page how many words and/or numbers can be used to answer the questions. It is important to know that there can be more than one correct answer to a question. For example, you could write a percentage as '14%' or '14 percent' or 'fourteen percent'. All three answers are acceptable.

EXAM PRACTICE

SECTION 2



✓ Questions 11 – 18

Complete the notes below.

Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR NUMBERS for each answer.

Adelaide Zoo

Opened in:	(11)
First director:	(12) Ernest Milchin
Birds exported in the 1950s:	cockatoos
	budgerigars
	(13)
	(14)
Number of flamingos:	1
Oldest flamingo:	(15)
Ticket prices:	
Children:	\$19.50
Adults:	\$35
Family ticket:	(16)
Animals:	pandas
	orangutans
	(17)
(18) times for:	lions
	penguins
	pelicans

Don't get blocked by words that you don't know. It's possible you will not need these words to answer the questions.

IELTS SKILLS 2: DEALING WITH NUMBERS

Hundreds, thousands, millions and billions

- 100 (*one hundred*)
- 1,000 (*one thousand*)
- 10,000 (*ten thousand*)
- 100,000 (*one hundred thousand*)
- 1,000,000 (*one million*)
- 1,100,100 (*one million, one hundred thousand, one hundred*)
- 1,000,000,000 (*one billion*)

When to say 'and'

It is true that in American English 'and' is almost never used in numbers but in British English 'and' is used regularly:

Between hundreds and numbers lower than one hundred

Examples: 123 (*one hundred and twenty-three*)
 702 (*seven hundred and two*)
 589,000 (*five hundred and eighty-nine thousand*)

Between thousands and numbers lower than one hundred

Examples: 1,059 (*one thousand and fifty-nine*)
 5,312 (*five thousand, three hundred and twelve*)

Between numbers higher than one thousand and numbers lower than one hundred

Examples: 1,000,001 (*one million and one*)
 1,000,000,092 (*one billion and ninety-two*)

Fractions

For every fraction except $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$, we use ordinals.

- $\frac{1}{2}$ (*a half*)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ (*a third*)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ (*a quarter*)
- $\frac{1}{5}$ (*a fifth*)
- $\frac{1}{240}$ (*one two-hundred-and-fortieth*)

Decimals

A point (.) is used to create decimals, not to be confused with commas (,), which are used to separate thousands from hundreds, millions from thousands and hundreds, etc. After a decimal point, in English, we always say the numbers individually.

- 6.65 (*six point six five*)
- 3.141596 (*three point one four one five nine six*)
- 11,543 (*eleven thousand five hundred and forty-three*)

EXAM PRACTICE

SECTION 3



✓ Questions 21 – 28: Complete the notes below.

Write NO MORE THAN ONE WORD AND/OR NUMBER for each answer.

	<i>History of Linguistics</i>	<i>Advanced Phonetics</i>	<i>Grammar and All Its Uses</i>	(26) <i>Idioms</i>
Price	(21)	£25	(24)	£40
Student discount	20%	N/A	10%	(27)
Net price	(22)	(23)	(25)	(28)

Remember not to exceed the word limit. If you are only allowed two words and the answer is 'glasses', then 'pair of glasses' would not be accepted as a correct answer.

IELTS SKILLS 3: MORE NUMBERS, NAMES AND ADDRESSES

Years

As a general rule, for every year up to 2000, we say the numbers in pairs.

Examples: 1999 (nineteen ninety-nine)
1492 (fourteen ninety-two)
1066 (ten sixty-six)

For centuries and years below ten, we say the year differently.

Examples: 1700 (seventeen hundred)
1603 (sixteen oh three)

For years after two thousand, there are currently two possibilities.

Examples: 2002 (two thousand and two or twenty oh two)
2018 (two thousand and eighteen or twenty eighteen)

Zero, nought, love, nil, 'oh'

In tennis: 15 – 0 (fifteen – love)

In football: 1 – 0 (one – nil)

For telephone numbers: 01227 (oh one two two seven)

For the temperature: 0°C (zero degree Celsius)

For percentages: 0.7% (in British English: nought point seven percent)

For numbers after a decimal point: 0.05 (in British English: nought point oh five)

Addresses

In the UK, most street numbers only go up to three or four hundred. For numbers up to one hundred, we say them as normal numbers, so 46 Reservoir Road would be pronounced 'forty-six'. For larger numbers, we find an easier way to say and to understand the numbers.

Examples: 146 Victoria Street is said 'one four six'
101 Albert Street is said 'one oh one'

In the US, house numbers can be significantly larger:

Examples: 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is said 'sixteen hundred'
2445 Maple Road is said 'twenty-four forty-five'

Spelling

Any difficult names or words will be spelled for you on the IELTS, so it is important to know how to say the letters of the alphabet. This is one of those things you just have to learn, but there are one or two tricks to help you avoid the common mistakes.

Vowels: The letters 'e' and 'i' cause many problems in isolation, but very few people make the same mistake when talking about the iPhone or an e-mail.

Text messages: 'I see you are ready to go' can be shortened to 'I C U R ready 2 go'.

EXAM PRACTICE

SECTION 4



✓ Questions 31 – 38

Complete the notes below.

Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR NUMBERS for each answer.

Archaeologists believe the first wines appeared about (31) years ago.



Today, it is legal in over a hundred countries, with an age limit of about (32) years old.



About (33) is absorbed into the blood through the stomach walls and the rest through the small intestine.



It dilutes itself into the water volume of the body, which travels quickly to organs that contain a lot of water and need blood like the (34)



The kidney eliminates about (35) of the alcohol in urine.



The lungs exhale about 5%, which is why drivers can be caught using (36) tests.



The remaining alcohol is broken down into (37) by the liver.



Alcohol is eliminated from the body at a rate of about (38) per hour.

When you are given time before the recording starts, use this time to see what kind of information you are required to find and to get a general idea of the subject matter you will be dealing with.

MINI TEST

SECTION 2



PLAY TRACK

6

✓ Questions 11 – 16

Complete the notes below.

Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR NUMBERS for each answer.

Chestfield Film Festival

Started in:	1975
Held:	Yearly in (11)
Films:	Exclusively (12)
Prizes given since:	1990
Jury from:	Britain
	France
	Italy
	Germany
	(13)
	(14)
	Winning director from previous year
Attendances up to:	(15)
Duration:	(16)