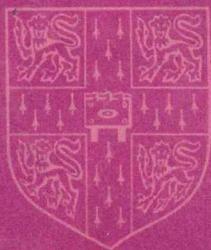


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Introduction

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is widely recognised as a reliable means of assessing whether candidates are ready to study or train in the medium of English. IELTS is owned by three partners, The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, the British Council and IDP Education Australia (through its subsidiary company IELTS Australia Pty Limited). The main purpose of this book of Practice Tests is to give future IELTS candidates an idea of whether their English is at the required level. Further information on IELTS can be found in the IELTS Handbook available free of charge from IELTS centres.

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
--	---

The test modules are taken in the following order.

Listening 4 sections, 40 items 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 10 to 15 minutes	
Total test time 2 hours 45 minutes	

Listening

This is in four sections, each with 10 questions. 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 to educational or training contexts. There is a conversation between up to four people and then a monologue.

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

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

Academic Reading

There are three reading passages, of increasing difficulty, on topics of general interest and candidates have to answer 40 questions. The passages are taken from magazines, journals, books and newspapers. At least one text contains detailed logical argument.

A variety of question types is used, including: multiple choice, short-answer questions, sentence completion, notes/chart/table completion, labelling a diagram, classification, matching lists/phrases, choosing suitable paragraph headings from a list, identification of writer's views/attitudes – yes, no, not given.

General Training Reading

Candidates have to answer 40 questions. There are three sections of increasing difficulty, containing texts 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/chart/table completion, labelling a diagram, classification, matching lists/phrases, choosing suitable paragraph headings from a list, identification of writer's views/attitudes – yes, no, not given, or true, false, not given.

Academic Writing

There are two tasks and 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 – 250 words. The assessment of Task 2 carries more weight in marking than Task 1.

In Task 1 candidates are asked to look at a diagram or table 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, explain how something works.

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, evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or arguments.

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

General Training Writing

There are two tasks and 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 – 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, evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or arguments.

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

Speaking

This consists of a conversation between the candidate and an examiner and takes between 10 and 15 minutes. There are five sections:

1 Introduction

The examiner and candidate introduce themselves and the candidate is encouraged to talk briefly about their life, home, work and interests.

2 Extended discourse

The candidate is encouraged to speak at length about some familiar topic of general interest or of relevance to their culture, place of living or country of origin. This will involve explanation, description or narration.

3 Elicitation

The candidate is given a task card with some information on it and is encouraged to take the initiative and ask questions either to elicit information or to solve a problem.

4 Speculation and Attitudes

The candidate is encouraged to talk about their future plans and proposed course of study. Alternatively the examiner may choose to return to a topic raised earlier.

5 Conclusion

The interview is concluded.

Candidates are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively with native speakers of English. The assessment takes into account evidence of communicative strategies and appropriate use of grammar and vocabulary.

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 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.*

Most universities and colleges in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada accept an IELTS Overall Band Score of 6.0 or 6.5 for entry to academic programmes. IELTS scores are increasingly being recognised by Universities in the USA.