

IELTS Made Easy: How To Pass IELTS in One-Sitting

by

**Derin Ogunmola
2019 © All Rights Reserved.**

SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION TO

IELTS

i. What is IELTS?

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is an international standardized test of English language proficiency for non-native English language speakers.

It is jointly managed by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge Assessment English.

ii. Why take IELTS?

Most people take IELTS because it is accepted as evidence of proficiency for those who want to migrate and undergo foreign study abroad.

iii. Types of IELTS Exams?

For the purpose of relocating to Australia, there are 2 types of IELTS:

1. **Academic Module:** It is intended for those who want to enroll in universities and other institutions of higher education and for professionals who want to study or practice in an English speaking country.
2. **General Training Module:** It is intended for those planning to undertake non-academic training or to gain work experience, or for immigration purposes.

iv. The 4 Parts Of IELTS

- Listening: 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes' transfer time)
- Reading: 60 minutes
- Writing: 60 minutes
- Speaking: 11-14 minutes.

The total time for the tests is about 2 hours and 45 minutes.

- Listening, Reading and Writing are completed on one sitting.
- The speaking test may be taken on the same day or up to seven days before or after the other tests. It is advisable to take this test before the others, so, at least 1 of the tests is already out of the way.
- All test-takers take the same Listening and Speaking tests, while the Reading and Writing tests differ depending on the version you, the test-taker is taking.

v. **How The IELTS Is Scored**

You will receive a score for each test component. The individual scores are then averaged and rounded to produce an **Overall Band Score**.

There is no pass or fail. IELTS is scored on a nine-band scale, with each band corresponding to a specified competence in English.

You can also be given a score in-between the bands e.g. 6.5, 7.5, etc. The nine bands are described as follows:

9 - Expert User

8- Very Good User

7- Good User

6- Competent User

5- Modest User

4- Limited User

3 - Extremely Limited User

2 - Intermittent User

1 - Non User

0 - Did not attempt the test

Irrespective of the type of test you are doing, you should aim to score a minimum of least 7.5.

Depending on the reason why you are taking IELTS, you would be required to score any number between 7.5 and 9.

Whatever the case, based on your reason for taking the tests and type of test you are taking, you would know the minimum score required of you.

vi. A cross-section of how the Exam Hall is arranged.



Source: www.topuniversities.com

You would notice from the picture that test-takers are barely allowed to take anything. Tables usually only have paper, writing materials and water or something to drink in a transparent bottle.

SECTION 2:

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND GET A HIGH SCORE IN YOUR IELTS IN ONE-SITTING

1) Practice! Practice!! Practice!!!

The best and easiest way to prepare and excel in your IELTS on your first trial is to practice sample questions many times over, the way you practiced jamb question papers.

The great thing about IELTS is that, unlike Jamb and WAEC, it is not about the questions, it is about the format and rules of the tests and time management, so, you don't need to cram any answers.

Why the emphasis on Practice?

Because continuous practice would help you achieve 2 things:

i. Understand the IELTS test format and rules

In order to pass IELTS is to get familiar with the test and what is required of you in the answers. The format and rules for each of the 4 parts differ, thus, you have to carefully commit these difference to heart.

Practicing sample IELTS test papers would enable you to have in-depth understanding of this. Nevertheless, I would still give you unique tips for each part/section below.

ii. Know how to manage the allotted exam time wisely

If you understand the format and rules, however, cannot manage the time allotted to each task in each section, then, you might not be able to answer all questions, which might reduce your chances of getting the adequate number of questions correct for the minimum band score that is required of you.

Guide to IELTS Test Formats and Rules to Remember

1. LISTENING

This test comprises of four sections, with ten questions in each section. Sections 1 and 2 are about every day, social situations. Sections 3 and 4 are about educational and training situations.

The questions are in the same order as the information in the recordings. The first three sections have a break in the middle to allow you to look at the remaining questions.

Candidates listen to a number of recorded texts. These include a mixture of monologues and conversations and feature a variety of English accents. Each recording is heard only once, and candidates are given time to read the questions and write down their answers.

Please, be mindful of your spellings and tenses, otherwise, you will lose marks for incorrect spelling and grammar.

Study Tips

- Familiarize yourself with various foreign accents, so, your ears can become tuned to understanding any accent that you would be listening to on that day.

Try to listen to a variety of English accents including American, Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand. You can also listen to podcasts.

IELTS Listening Exam Tips

- Make sure your headphones are working
- If no headphones are used, make sure you can hear the recording.
- Use the time given to prepare your answers.
- Write your answers on your question paper while you listen

- Make sure you notice how many words you can have for each answer.
- You will be given 10 minutes after the recording to transfer your answers to the answer sheet. Always check your spelling and grammar.
- It is recommended to use all CAPITAL LETTERS for your answers.
- You should practice doing this at home. Focus on listening for answers rather than trying to understand everything.
- Always check your spelling and grammar before submitting.

2. READING

The reading paper has three sections and texts totaling 2,150-2,750 words.

There will be a variety of question types, such as multiple choice, short-answer questions, identifying writer's views, identifying information, labeling diagrams, completing a summary using words taken from the text and matching information/ headings features in the text / sentence endings.

The test is aimed at testing your ability to grasp the meaning of the text you are given to read. Keep that in mind.

You have 40 questions to answer. You are not there to memorize the text, so don't let the length bother you, however, you need to ensure you get your spellings and tenses correct because test-takers will lose marks for incorrect spellings and grammar.

- **Texts In IELTS Academic**

- Three reading texts from books, journals, magazines, newspapers and online resources written for non-specialist audiences.

- **Texts In IELTS General Training**

- Section 1 contains two or three short texts or several shorter texts, which deal with everyday topics

- Section 2 contains two texts, which deal with work

- Section 3 contains one long text about a topic of general interest and is descriptive rather than argumentative.

Important Points to Note for Reading Test

- **Skim the passage quickly**

Since you are there to only understand the general meaning of the text, don't attempt to understand the rationale behind any given argument. Stick to the goal, which is to get the answers correct.

The best way to go about this, is to read the questions first, instead of the text. If you read the questions once or twice and then start skimming the text, your brain will automatically try to find the possible answers to the questions. It's practical, give it a try.

One very important secret to note is that in IELTS, the answers to the questions follow each other. What do I mean by that? For example, if the answer of the first question is in line two of the second paragraph, most likely than not, the rest of the answers will come from the remainder of the passage.

So, you do not ever need to go back to start reading the essay from the beginning to answer the other questions.

In the same vein, if you quickly got the answer to question 1 and question 3, then, you should automatically know that the answer to question 2 is hidden somewhere between where you got the answer to question 1 and where you got the answer to question 3. So, search right there and you would definitely find the answer to question 2.

I hope I am clear on this. This would help you manage your time wisely.

Other IELTS Reading Exam Tips

- Read the instructions carefully
- Don't waste time trying to find one answer
- Keep your eye on the clock

- Write your answers directly on to your answer sheet. There is no time for transferring later.
- Look out for paraphrasing
- Always spend time (however, not too much) analysing the questions before looking for an answer.

3. WRITING

The writing paper has two tasks which must both be completed. In task 1, test takers write at least 150 words in about 20 minutes. In task 2, test takers write at least 250 words in about 40 minutes.

Please note that, you would be penalized if their answer is too short or does not relate to the topic.

- **IELTS Academic**

Task 1: Test-takers will be required to describe a graph, table, chart or diagram in their own words, at least 150 words. This demonstrates your ability to present information and to summarise the main features of the input.

Task 2: Test-takers will be required to discuss a point of view, argument or problem. Here, you are expected to write a short essay of at least 250 words in response to a statement or question. You are expected to demonstrate an ability to present a position, construct an argument and discuss abstract issues.

- **IELTS General Training**

Task 1: Test-takers write a letter in response to a given everyday situation. Here, you will be required to write a letter of at least 150 words either asking for information, or explaining a situation.

Task 2: Test-takers write an essay about a topic of general interests. Here, you are required to write a short essay of at least 250 words in response to a statement or question. You are expected to demonstrate an ability to present a position, construct an argument and discuss issues.

IELTS Writing Exam Tips

- You can plan your essay on the question paper: to get a good score, try and scribble your main ideas. Make a very quick plan on how you are going to write the essay.

This will make your writing look more organized and you will easily express yourself. There is a lot of mark awarded for neat and organized work. It will be very hard if you try to do it while writing.

- When you reach the end of your writing, and you immediately think of a very good idea that you should have put in, say the second paragraph, don't try and put everything in the conclusion. In order to get the mark for the idea, after writing the conclusion, leave a space and then put down your awesome idea.

After putting it down, link the separate idea with a long arrow to where it's supposed to be in the essay.

- Don't spend more than 20 minutes on task 1. You need 40 minutes for task 2.
- Write over 150 words for task 1 and over 250 words for task 2.
- Don't count the number of words, count the lines and estimate your word count.
- Always write a clear overview for task 1 academic. For General Training task 1, make sure you cover all points requested in your letter.

- Always write your conclusion for task 2.
- Always organise your writing into paragraphs and check your spellings because as already mentioned under listening above, marks are lost for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.
- Keep all information focused and relevant.
- You may ask for more paper but do not remove any paper from the exam room.

4. SPEAKING

The speaking test is a face-to-face interview between you and an examiner. You will be assessed on your use of spoken English to answer short questions, to speak at length on a familiar topic, and also to interact with the examiner.

The speaking test contains three sections.

Section 1: Introduction and Interview (4-5 minutes)

Section 2: You'll be given a task card about a particular topic to talk about. (3-4 minutes).

Section 3: Discussions (4-5 minutes)

Study Tips

- Practice previous speaking test papers.
- Record yourself speaking in order to monitor your pronunciation, stress and accent.

IELTS Speaking Exam Tips

- Practice speaking English before your test.

- Listen to the question and answer it directly
- Add more information to all answers
- Don't focus on vocabulary alone but use a range of grammar tenses.
- If you didn't hear properly the first time, ask the examiner to repeat the question.
- If the examiner interrupts you, don't worry about it.
- Just answer the question: At the start of the test, just give the information that's needed rather than expanding too much on your answers.

Wait until you hear questions about your home, work, school-life and so on before giving more extended answers. Even then, provide relevant answers and avoid rambling on about everything you can think of. Candidates often stray from the topic by going off on tangents – avoid this. Think of structuring your responses this way:

Sample IELTS Speaking question: **“What type of weather do you enjoy most?”**

OPENING (optional)	Hmm. It’s hard to say because I like all seasons but...
ANSWER	I would say summer would have to be my all-time favorite.
REASON/EXAMPLE	You know, the summer is just great. There are so many things to do outside, you can be near the water, yes...if it’s too hot, it’s better to hang out at the beach. I really love the beach and watersports like surfing...
CLOSE	so, yes, if I had to choose one, it would be summer for sure.

It should be fairly obvious, but make every effort to answer the question. Don’t refuse or “give up” on the question:

RATHER THAN...	TRY THIS:
<i>I don’t know... I can’t answer that question.</i>	<i>Hmm, that’s a tricky question...Let me think about that...yes, I guess I would say that...</i>

Source: FluentU.com

Then, do your best to answer the question! The phrases above are useful for giving yourself some thinking time and could get you out of a jam. Using these “filler” phrases also shows your ability to keep speaking despite facing a difficult question.

You’ll be given about a minute to think through the topic on the task. Quickly think through what you should say before talking. If you genuinely have no idea about the topic, you can point this out to the examiner and he/she might allow you to speak on a topic you are familiar with. However, as much as possible, try to avoid this scenario.

In conclusion, the one sure way of passing IELTS is by understanding the tests format and rules before taking the test on the exam day. Also, do ensure you manage your time wisely.

The way to achieve the above is to ensure that you familiarize yourself with the tests’ format and allotted time by practicing past questions many times over.

Remember, practice makes perfect! Practice is the key to your success. If you know your current level of English is quite unimpressive, starting from now up until days leading up to your IELTS test, try to read as much as you can.

Your favorite magazine could be a good start. Or even Newspapers. While reading, try to identify the main points of the text and attempt to summarize it in your mind. The more you practice the more efficient you get.

With regards to managing the allotted test time appropriately, ensure you practice time-management lots of time in advance by setting a clock in front of you whenever you are solving sample papers. Remember, if for some reason you are unable to find the answer to a question, don’t waste time. Move on to the next question immediately.

Most importantly, and at the risk of sounding like a broken record, please, do make sure you have practiced several sample questions before your

exam day. I suggest at least five(5) complete IELTS practice tests each of each of the 4 parts/sections before taking the real test.

I recommend you visit <https://www.ielts-exam.net/> to see sample questions and expected IELTS answers to familiarize yourself. Spend time practicing using this site and you would surely excel. It also has sample answers for you to see how questions are expected to be answered, particularly, for the essay writing test.

Tips for the Exam Day

- Sleep and eat well
- Wear comfortable clothing
- You can take a drink in a transparent bottle into the exam room.
- Arrive early
- You can't use the toilet once the exams start so use the toilet before the exam
- No phones are allowed
- Take at least two pencils, pen and eraser to the exam room
- Don't forget your ID
- Listen to instructions
- There will be a clock in the exam room. You cannot take a watch into your test room.
- Speak to administrators at your test room well before your test date if you have any form of disability.

- Read the INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES booklet
- Carefully read 'Notice to candidates
- Don't cheat or take the test paper home
- No dictionary is allowed
- Don't continue writing after the invigilator tells you to stop. Just STOP immediately.

SECTION 3:

OTHER VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Very Important Registration Details

1. Please ensure you confirm the exact module you are registering for from the Authority that is requesting proof of English.
2. Please note that payment is by bank transfer or bank draft (in favor of British Council from any Nigerian Bank). As at the time of writing this guide, the test fee is NGN 75,000. Please, check the website for the current fee.
3. Please ensure your international passport is still valid and clear (not damaged) on your chosen test date.
4. You can only use the name that appears on your international passport. If you have undergone a name change, ensure the change is effected on your valid international passport.
5. Please ensure that you give a clear and detailed mailing address on the application form and ensure you break the address on the different address fields. Otherwise you can choose to pick your results at the British Council office closest to you. Please do not give PO Box or PMB as these would NOT be delivered.
6. If you would like to request for additional copies of your results to be sent to institutions abroad, please include the complete addresses with area codes as well as your case number with the organisation.

Otherwise, you can apply for these when you receive your scores 13 days after your test date. Please, visit this link to know how:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org.ng/exam/ielts>

IELTS Test Locations in Nigeria

1. Abeokuta
2. Abuja
3. Akure

4. Benin City
5. Calabar
6. Enugu
7. Ibadan
8. Ilorin
9. Kano
10. Lagos
11. Port Harcourt

To Book a Venue and Time:

Visit: <https://ielts.britishcouncil.org/Nigeria> .

Final Points to Note:

- i. Please, bear in mind that the Speaking test could come up within 7 days around the test date you registered for. A notice will be sent 4-7 days before the test date to notify you of your schedule and venue. Please be informed that your Speaking test will not be rescheduled if you fail to turn up at the allotted time.
- ii. Please ensure you appear for your test with your original international passport as no other form of identification will be allowed. The international passport presented must:
 - match the one used during registration.
- iii. Please, retain a copy of your online payment confirmation or confirmation receipt in the event of applying for refund.
- iv. Ensure you go through their website:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org.ng/exam/ielts>