Get started on your IELTS journey
Preparing for your test

Make sure you are ready to demonstrate your English
1. Familiarize yourself with the format of the test by reading this booklet. If you would like more information about the format of the test and the question types used, you can find the test specifications at www.IELTS.org/testtakers.
3. Consider doing a practice test. Two volumes of Official IELTS Practice Materials are available for purchase from test centers or at www.IELTS.org/testtakers. These materials include a full practice test with answers, and sample Writing and Speaking performances with examiner comments.
4. Consider enrolling in a preparation course to improve your performance in the test. IELTS test centers and language schools around the world offer IELTS preparation courses.

Tell your center if you have special requirements
In order to ensure that the language ability of all test takers is assessed fairly and objectively, IELTS provides a comprehensive service for test takers who have special requirements, including specific learning difficulties, hearing difficulties and visual difficulties.
If you require a modified version of the test, for example a Large Print or Braille version, you must give the test center three months’ notice. This notice period is necessary for the modified test version to be prepared. If your circumstances require special administrative arrangements to be made, for example if you need extra time or you need to use access technology such as a screen reader, you must give the test center six weeks’ notice. Please contact your test center to discuss your requirements. Any special arrangements agreed are in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Test format
There are two modules to choose from – Academic and General Training.

IELTS Academic
IELTS Academic is for test takers wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and for those seeking professional registration.

IELTS General Training
IELTS General Training is for test takers wishing to migrate to an English-speaking country (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK), and for those wishing to train or study at below degree level.
Each organization sets its own entry requirements. In some cases both Academic or General Training may be accepted. If you are in doubt as to which to take, you should contact the organization you are applying to in order to check their requirements.
You are tested on all four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking, unless you have an exemption due to a disability (see section on special requirements). Everyone takes the same Listening and Speaking tests. There are different Reading and Writing tests for IELTS Academic and General Training.
The Listening, Reading and Writing tests must be completed on the same day. The order in which these tests are taken may vary. There are no breaks between these three tests. The Speaking test may be taken up to seven days before or after the other three tests.

Know the IELTS rules and regulations
It’s important to familiarize yourself with the IELTS rules and regulations. These are laid out in the Notice to Candidates and Declaration which are included in the application form. When you sign the application form declaration, or agree to the terms online, you are confirming that you have read and understood the IELTS rules and regulations and agree to abide by them.

Register as soon as possible
When you feel you are ready to take the test, you need to register for a test date with an IELTS center. Contact the center as soon as possible, as the number of test takers who can take the test on a particular date may be limited. You will need to pay the test fee when you register.

IELTS info for candidates

Find us near you.
With tests available on paper, computer or online, we’ve made it easier than ever to access IELTS. Visit us online at www.IELTS.org/for-test-takers/book-a-test to find out more about test locations and dates.

Designed with you in mind.
Speak English like a local with IELTS. Your IELTS content is sourced from all over the English-speaking world, with a Listening test offered in a range of native-speaker accents that include North American, Australian, New Zealand, British and more. You’re also welcome to use all standard varieties of English in your written and spoken responses.

Your globally trusted test.
Your IELTS test has been developed by some of the world’s leading experts in language testing. It’s supported by a wide range of research, validation and development to offer you the very best English test.

Grow with us.
With IELTS, your English language skills are assessed across a wide range of levels. There is no such thing as a pass or fail in IELTS. Results are awarded as band scores on a scale of 1 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest).

Your International English language partner.
IELTS is the International English Language Testing System. It is designed to assess and award your ability to study, work and succeed in the English language.
With IELTS, your potential is recognized and valued by over 11,000 organizations worldwide: universities, employers, professional bodies, immigration authorities, government agencies, and more.

For a full list of possibilities, visit www.IELTS.org/recognition.

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The four components of the IELTS test

Listening

**Timing**
Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes' transfer time).

**Questions**
There are 40 questions. A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labelling, form completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, summary completion, sentence completion, short-answer questions.

**Test Parts**
There are 4 sections:

- **Section 1** is a conversation between two people set in an everyday social context (e.g. a conversation in an accommodation agency).

- **Section 2** is a monologue set in an everyday social context (e.g. a speech about local facilities or a talk about the arrangements for meals during a conference).

- **Section 3** is a conversation between up to four people set in an educational or training context (e.g. a university tutor and a student discussing an assignment, or a group of students planning a research project).

- **Section 4** is a monologue on an academic subject (e.g. a university lecture).

**Skills assessed**
A wide range of listening skills are assessed, including:
- understanding of main ideas
- understanding of specific factual information
- recognizing opinions, attitudes and purpose of a speaker
- following the development of an argument.

**Marking**
Each correct answer receives 1 mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

Reading

**Timing**
60 minutes (no extra transfer time).

**Questions**
There are 40 questions. A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, identifying information (True/False/Not Given), identifying a writer's views/claims (Yes/No/Not Given), identifying a writer's views/claims (Yes/No/Not Given), matching information, matching headings, matching features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, diagram label completion, short-answer questions.

**Test Parts**
There are 3 sections. The total text length is 2,150-2,750 words.

**Academic Reading**
Each section contains one long text. Texts are authentic and are taken from books, journals, magazines and newspapers. They have been written for a non-specialist audience and are on academic topics of general interest.

**General Training Reading**
Section 1 contains two or three short factual texts, one of which may be composite (consisting of 6-8 short texts related by topic, e.g. hotel advertisements). Topics are relevant to everyday life in an English-speaking country.

Section 2 contains two short factual texts focusing on work-related issues (e.g. applying for jobs, company policies, pay and conditions, workplace facilities, staff development and training).

Section 3 contains one longer, more complex text on a topic of general interest.

**Skills assessed**
A wide range of reading skills are assessed, including:
- reading for gist
- reading for main ideas
- reading for detail
- understanding inferences and implied meaning
- recognizing writer's opinions, attitudes and purpose
- following the development of an argument.

**Marking**
Each correct answer receives 1 mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.
**Writing**

**Timing**
60 minutes

**Tasks**
There are 2 tasks. You are required to write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2.

**Test Parts**
There are 2 parts.

**Academic Writing**
In Task 1, you are presented with a graph, table, chart or diagram and are asked to describe, summarize or explain the information in your own words. You may be asked to describe and explain data, describe the stages of a process, how something works or describe an object or event.

In Task 2, you are asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. The issues raised are of general interest 

**Skills assessed**
In both tasks, you are assessed on your ability to respond which is appropriate in terms of:
- content
- the organization of ideas
- the accuracy and range of vocabulary and grammar.

**Academic Writing**
In Task 1, you are assessed on your ability to organize, present and possibly compare data; to describe the stages of a process or procedure; to describe an object or event or sequence of events; to explain how something works.

In Task 2, you are assessed on your ability to present a solution to a problem; to present and justify an opinion; to compare and contrast evidence, opinions and implications; to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

**General Training Writing General**
In Task 1, depending on the task type, you are assessed on your ability to engage in personal correspondence in order to: elicit and provide general factual information; express needs, wants, likes and dislikes; express opinions (views, complaints etc.).

In Task 2, you are assessed on your ability to provide general factual information; to outline a problem and present a solution; to present and possibly justify an opinion; to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument.

**Skills assessed**
In both tasks, you are assessed on your ability to write a response which is appropriate in terms of:
- content
- the organization of ideas
- the accuracy and range of vocabulary and grammar.

**Marking**
You are assessed on your performance on each task by certificated IELTS examiners according to the IELTS Writing test assessment criteria (Task Achievement/Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy). The public version of the assessment criteria can be found at www.IELTS.org/criteria.

Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

**Speaking**

**Timing**
11-14 minutes

**Test Parts**
There are 3 parts.

**Part 1 Introduction and interview** (4-5 minutes)
The examiner introduces him/herself and asks you to introduce yourself and confirm your identity. The examiner asks you general questions on familiar topics, e.g. home, family, work, studies and interests.

**Part 2 Individual long turn** (3-4 minutes)
The examiner gives you a task card which asks you to talk about a particular topic and which includes points you can cover in your talk. You are given 1 minute to prepare your talk, and are given a pencil and paper to make notes. You talk for 1-2 minutes on the topic. The examiner may then ask you one or two questions on the same topic.

**Part 3 Two-way discussion** (4-5 minutes)
The examiner asks further questions which are connected to the topic of Part 2. These questions give you an opportunity to discuss more abstract issues and ideas.

**Skills assessed**
A wide range of speaking skills are assessed, including:
- the ability to communicate opinions and information on everyday topics and common experiences and situations by answering a range of questions
- the ability to speak at length on a given topic using appropriate language and organizing ideas coherently
- the ability to express and justify opinions and to analyze, discuss and speculate about issues.

**Marking**
You are assessed on your performance throughout the test by certificated IELTS examiners according to the IELTS Speaking test assessment criteria (Fluency and Coherence, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy, Pronunciation). The public version of the assessment criteria can be found at www.IELTS.org/criteria.

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.
An example of a completed question type:

You must write your answers on the question paper. At the end of the test, you will have 10 minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet. It is essential that you transfer your answers to the answer sheet as nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.

You must write your answers in pencil.

An example of a completed Listening answer sheet is given on the next page.

Completion question types (e.g. note completion):
- Pay attention to the word limit. For example, if you are asked to complete a sentence using NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS, and the correct answer is ‘leather coat’, the answer ‘coat made of leather’ would be incorrect.

You will be given time to read through each recording in the Listening test is heard once only. As you listen, write your answers on the question paper. At the end of the test, you will have 10 minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet.

You may write your answers on the question paper and transfer them to the answer sheet before the end of the test. You will not be given extra time to transfer answers at the end of the test. Nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.

You must write your answers in pencil.

An example of a completed Reading answer sheet is given on the next page.

You may make notes on the question paper. At the end of the test, you will have 10 minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet. You must write your answers on the question paper and transfer them to the answer sheet. At the end of the test, you will not be given extra time to transfer answers at the end of the test. Nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.

You must write your answers in pencil.

An example of a completed Writing answer sheet is given on the next page.

You may write your answers in pencil or pen.

Pay attention to spelling and grammar; you will lose marks for mistakes.

You may write your answers in lower case or in capitals.

Completion question types (e.g. note completion):
- The same rules apply to completion question types as in Listening (see above).
- The word(s) you use must be taken from the Reading text. You will not need to change the form of the word(s) in the text.

Writing
- You may write your answers in pencil or pen.
- Pay attention to the number of words required for each task. You will lose marks if you do not write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2.
- You should spend approximately 20 minutes on Task 1 and approximately 40 minutes on Task 2.
- You must write your answers in full; answers written in note form or in bullet points will lose marks.
- Pay attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation; you will lose marks for mistakes.
- You may write your answers entirely in capitals if you wish.
- You may make notes on the question paper but nothing you write on the question paper will be marked.

There are no restrictions on re-taking IELTS. You can register for a test as soon as you feel you are ready to do so. Please note that your score is unlikely to increase unless you make a significant effort to improve your English before re-taking the test. More information is available from www.IELTS.org/resitting.

Enquiries on results
If you are unhappy with your test result, you can apply for a re-mark (Enquiry on Results) at the center where you took the test. You must make the application no later than two years old. Results validity period
Organizations will not usually accept a Test Report Form that is more than two years old unless you provide evidence that you have actively maintained or tried to improve your English since taking the test. The IELTS Test Partners cannot confirm the validity of test results that are more than two years old.

Test Report Form to up to five organizations free of charge.

The Test Report Form
You will receive a Test Report Form which reports a score for each of the four skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), as well as an overall band score. Half band scores may be awarded to indicate a stronger performance within a particular band. You can find more information on score processing and score interpretation at www.IELTS.org/criteria.

Results are available 13 calendar days after the test. At some test centers test takers may collect their results on the 13th day; at others, results are mailed on the 13th day. Test centers are not permitted to give results over the phone or by fax or email.

You will receive only one copy of the Test Report Form. It’s important that you keep it safe as replacement Test Report Forms cannot be issued. Test centers will send copies of your Test Report Form to up to five organizations free of charge.

Re-taking IELTS

You can register for a test as soon as you feel you are ready to do so. Please note that your score is unlikely to increase unless you make a significant effort to improve your English before re-taking the test. More information is available from www.IELTS.org/resitting.

Enquiries on results
If you are unhappy with your test result, you can apply for a re-mark (Enquiry on Results) at the center where you took the test. You must make the application no later than six weeks after the test date.

You can find more information on score processing and score interpretation at www.IELTS.org/criteria.

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Enquiries on results
If you are unhappy with your test result, you can apply for a re-mark (Enquiry on Results) at the center where you took the test. You must make the application no later than six weeks after the test date. You can choose which test components are re-marked. There is a fee for this service which will be refunded if your score on any component is increased. Enquiries on Results take six to eight weeks to complete.
IELTS five steps to success

1. Enquiry
Contact details for all IELTS test centers worldwide can be found at www.IELTS.org, where you can also download the application form.

2. Registration
Read through all the information you receive with the application form carefully. Complete the paper application form or online registration and submit it to your nearest test center. You will need to enclose the test fee or make the payment online.

Make sure you enter the number of your identity document (your passport or national identity card) and attach a clear color photocopy or scanned copy of your identity document to the application form. The identity document must be valid at the time of registration and the same ID document must be presented on the day of the test.

3. Confirmation
The test center will give you written confirmation of the date and time of the test. Your Speaking test time will be scheduled on the same day as the written tests or on a different day within a 7-day window before or after the written tests. The test center will confirm your Speaking test time.

4. Test day
Your identity will be checked on the day of the test and before the Speaking test. You must present the same identity document that you used when you registered for the test. Your photograph will be taken as an additional security measure, and it will appear on your IELTS Test Report Form. In addition a finger scan may be taken.

5. Results
Results will be available 13 calendar days after the test. At some test centers test takers can collect their results on the 13th day. At other test centers results are mailed to test takers on the 13th day. Test centers are not permitted to give results out over the phone or by scan or email.

Preview of your results is available online 13 calendar days after the test. Results will remain online for 28 days. Please note that the online preview of your results should not be used as an official confirmation of your performance.

Find out more at www.IELTS.org

Join the conversation at www.facebook.com/IELTSofficial
Watch our videos at www.youtube.com/IELTSofficial

Your privacy
The IELTS Test Partners recognize and support the right of genuine IELTS test candidates to privacy. For more information visit www.IELTS.org/privacy.