

# General information about IELTS

## Test format

IELTS has two versions - Academic and General Training

IELTS has four parts:

Listening (30 minutes)

Reading (60 minutes)

Writing (60 minutes)

and Speaking (11-14 minutes).

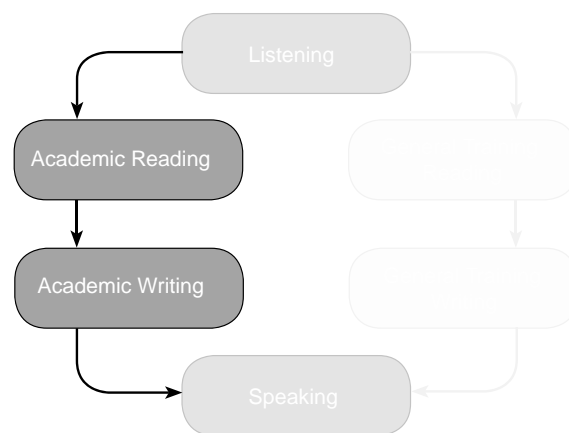
The total test time is 2 hours and 45 minutes.

The Listening, Reading and Writing tests are done in one sitting.

The Speaking test may be on the same day or up to seven days before or after the other tests.

The Academic module is for candidates wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and for those seeking professional registration

The General Training module is for candidates 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



# The test components

## Listening

Timing: Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes\* transfer time)

Questions: There are 40 questions

A variety of question types is 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)

Each section is heard once only

A variety of voices and native-speaker accents is used

Skills assessed: A wide range of listening skills is assessed, including understanding of main ideas and specific factual information; recognising opinions, attitudes and purpose of a speaker; and 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 is used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, identifying information (True/False/Not Given), identifying 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. Texts are appropriate to, and accessible to, candidates entering undergraduate or postgraduate courses or seeking professional registration. Texts range from the descriptive and factual to the discursive and analytical. Texts may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts contain technical terms, then a simple glossary is provided

### 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

Texts are authentic and are taken from notices, advertisements, company handbooks, official documents, books, magazines and newspapers

Skills assessed: A wide range of reading skills is assessed, including reading for gist, reading for main ideas, reading for detail; understanding inferences and implied meaning; recognising a writer's opinions, attitudes and purpose; and 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

Listening example task

Academic Reading  
example task

General Training Reading  
example task

Academic Writing example task

## Writing

Timing: 60 minutes

Tasks: There are 2 tasks

Candidates 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, candidates are presented with a graph, table, chart or diagram and are asked to describe, summarise or explain the information in their own words. They 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, candidates are asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem

The issues raised are of general interest to, suitable for and easily understood by candidates entering undergraduate or postgraduate studies or seeking professional registration

Responses to Task 1 and Task 2 should be written in a formal style

### **General Training Writing**

In Task 1, candidates are presented with a situation and are asked to write a letter requesting information or explaining the situation. The letter may be personal, semi-formal or formal in style

In Task 2, candidates are asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. The essay can be slightly more personal in style than the Academic Writing Task 2 essay

Topics are of general interest

**Skills assessed:** In both tasks, candidates are assessed on their ability to write a response which is appropriate in terms of content, the organisation of ideas, and the accuracy and range of vocabulary and grammar

### **Academic Writing**

In Task 1, depending on the task type, candidates are assessed on their ability to organise, 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, depending on the task type, candidates are assessed on their 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**

In Task 1, depending on the task type, candidates are assessed on their 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, candidates are assessed on their 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

**Marking:** Candidates are assessed on their performance on each task by certified IELTS examiners according to the four criteria of the IELTS Writing Test Band Descriptors (task achievement/response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy). The public version of the band descriptors can be found at [www.ielts.org/researchers/score\\_processing\\_and\\_reporting.aspx](http://www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx)

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

Tasks: There are 2 tasks

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Speaking example task

The test components ... additional guidance

*Writing*

*Listening*

Re-taking IELTS

Enquiries on Results

*Reading*

Special Requirements