

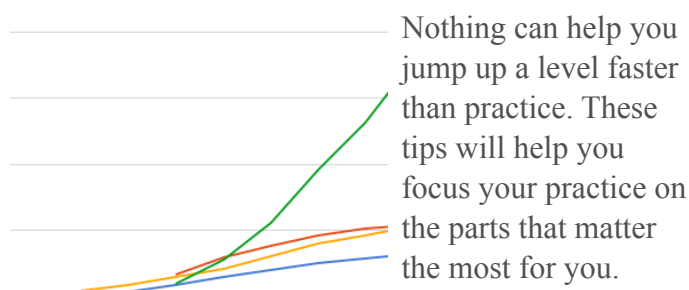
Top Tips for IELTS Success



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The IELTS test can be difficult, but a high score opens many doors.

If you are ready to maximize your scores, use these strategies to help show your true English abilities. You don't just need to be good at English; you must have strong test-taking skills as well in order to succeed.



Speaking - Use the time provided to make some notes about your subject. Remember to start at the beginning of your story with general information, and to become more specific as your time continues. Start with the oldest information and go forwards. This will help your examiner, who may not be familiar with your situation, to understand you.

Listening - Ignore the answer paper while listening. There is time at the end to write on the answer sheet. Pay special attention to the questions and listen for that information in the conversation. Practice listening to English accents from around the world as well - some dialogues are presented by North American, English, or Australian speakers.

Reading - Some people wait until the end of the Reading section to write on the answer paper. Write your answers on the answer paper as you complete the questions to make sure you don't run out of time.

Writing - Spelling and grammar skills are essential for success in this section. Be able to proofread your work and eliminate mistakes. Write clearly, because problems here can really cost you marks quickly.

Reading skills affect everything

Practice reading more than you think you have to. Speed reading is especially important, because all of the sections of the test require reading skill just to understand the questions and answers. Having a quick and thorough comprehension of the test itself will allow you to concentrate on giving the best the English answers in all sections of the test. Practice reading for detail, speed-reading, skimming, and scanning. To get your highest possible score, you will have to use all of these skills correctly.



Get Comfortable

Stress from the test situation can really hurt your score. By becoming familiar with the test and its questions, avoiding extra stress, and writing as effectively as you can, you can help to make sure that your score is true.

Become familiar with the types of questions that are on the test, but don't forget the answers. Read the instructions carefully for each section, and make sure that you follow them exactly. Answers that are correct, but presented in the wrong style, will not

count. Make sure that you write the answers in the right spaces - the answer number and the question number must match. Stress can make even the most sensible person forget!

Bring writing equipment - wooden pencils, a pencil sharpener, an eraser - and maybe a bottle of water. Don't drink too much before the exam, though, because washroom visits will take away from your answer time. Avoid bringing lots of personal belongings, too. You don't want to worry about other items while writing.

How To Prepare



Many people will take the test several times, hoping to get a higher score each time. Instead of spending \$300 on a test, why not take a class?

Three hundred dollars should get you a week of full-time classes at a private language school. If you'd rather have a private tutor, that amount should get you about six hours of lessons with an experienced tutor.

Teachers and tutors vary. Don't be afraid to ask them about their experience with IELTS specifically, as well as teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking courses.

Practice The Test



Knowing what to expect will make your test easier. Practice questions and answers are available from ielts.org. You can also download answer sheets there. Print them double-sided on 11x17 paper if you want the real experience.

Use them for your writing, so you can see how much space you need for each section. Your practice sessions should teach you approximately what an essay of 150 to 250 words looks like, and this will help you avoid counting words during the test. Stick to the time suggestions, too. Task 1 should take you less than 20 minutes to complete.

Follow The Time



Time management skills are essential. Part of the IELTS test is to measure how effectively you can answer the questions under pressure from a deadline.

While practicing, make a note of the timing and do some math. There are only 90 seconds per question in the Reading section, and that includes time to read and understand the question, find the answer, and mark the paper.

Set a time limit for your practice tests that is 5 or 10 minutes less than the real test and try to make that deadline. This will help lower your stress on test day.