

IELTS Tips

1- General Tips

- Avoid translating everything.
- Get ENOUGH sleep. Never stay up late before the exam.
- Have a light meal. Some dates or honey mixed with water is highly recommended.
- Dress comfortably.
- Make sure that you already know where the exam place is.
- Understanding and observing the instructions of every question is very important in the four sections of the test.
- The best and most important tip is (**PRACTICE**).
- Do not leave any question unanswered. Answer all the questions even if you are not sure of their answers. There is no penalty for guessing. Never guess unless you are about to run out of time. However, you need to make intelligent guesses. For example, statements that look logical are often (Not Given). Such statements are put there to trap candidates into believing the statement is actually mentioned and true.
- Taking practice tests without feedback and checking what went wrong is a waste of time
- Time is crucial. You must answer as soon as possible
- Stay relaxed and focused. Panicking will not do any good for you. Take a deep breath when feeling nervous.

Test Day (Advice)

You must bring with you

- Your ID card or your passport if you are taking the test outside your country, you need to bring.
- The pens, pencils and erasers which you need for the test.
- Know the date, time and place of your test and arrive before the starting time.
- You must not bring into the test room the following items:
 - Correction fluid and highlighters.
 - Mobile phones and pagers: they must be switched off and kept outside the exam room

During the test you must

- Tell the supervisor if you think you have not been given the right question paper, or if the question paper is incomplete or illegible.
- You may not lend anything to, or borrow anything from, another candidate.

Advice and assistance during the test

- Notify the test invigilator immediately if test day conditions in any way impede your performance.
- You cannot ask for, and you will not be given, any explanation of the questions.

2- Tips on the IELTS Reading Section

- Read faster by reading words in groups/chunks rather than word by word.
- Do not give more than one answer in a gap. Otherwise, it will be marked as wrong.
- There are two extremes:
- Before going immediately to the question, familiarize yourself with the passage by examining: the title, headings, pictures, and the first few lines of each paragraph. This will help you
 - grasp the overall idea of the passage
 - find/locate answers easily
- Learn the skill of 'scanning' the text looking for key words. Then read around the keyword to find the answer. In other words, use the keyword in a question in order to find the answer. If there is no keyword in the question, you can read the first two sentences of each paragraph to know if it might include the answer.
- In filling gaps questions, your knowledge of grammar can be useful. For example, if you have the following: (this is a challenge), you can easily conclude that the word in the gap must be an adjective beginning with a consonant rather than a vowel. Another example is the following: "The police believe the driver of a (17) lost control of the vehicle". Question 17 must be a singular noun beginning with a consonant, since the word before the gap is the indefinite article "a".

- Do not waste time reading, enjoying, and completely understanding the passage. You can return to the passage for each question. That is why there is no need to understand it completely.
- You are advised to skip time-consuming questions and get back to them later in order not to miss the easier questions. An example is (all the following are true/mentioned in the passage EXCEPT ...). Such a question is time-consuming because you need to check that all the other choices exist in the passage in order to identify the choice that is not mentioned.
- If you are unsure of the spelling of a word, write an approximation of the way the answer sounds. Sometimes you can copy it from the exam booklet itself.
- Do NOT spend too much time on a single question in order not to miss the easier questions.
- In the question that asks you to match headings to paragraphs, read a paragraph and then choose the most suitable heading.
- Be careful about what the question asks you to do. Do not confuse (TRUE/FALSE/NOT GIVEN) with (YES/NO/NOT GIVEN) questions. So, if you put (TRUE) while you are supposed to answer with (YES), you lose the mark.
- It is extremely important to pace yourself so that you do not run out of time without answering all the questions. Thus, each passage has almost

20 minutes INCLUDING the time for transferring your answers to the answer sheet.

- When you read the first sentence of a paragraph, you have a general idea about what it is about. As you read the questions, try to determine which paragraph will have the answer. It will save time if you can jump straight to the paragraph, so try to remember what you learned from the first sentences. For example, if the first paragraph is about poets; the second is about poetry, and a question asks about poetry, where will the answer be? It will be in the second paragraph of course.

3- Tips on the IELTS Writing Section

It is extremely important to read the IELTS Band Descriptors that can tell you what examiners want to see in your answers. These are available at the IELTS website (www.IELTS.org)

It is also equally important to pace yourself. Thus, Task1 should take almost 20 minutes while Task2 should take 40 minutes.

The process of writing both tasks (Task 1 & 2) consists of three main stages: pre-writing, writing, and post-writing. You should pace yourself according to this.

In the pre-writing stage, you should:

1. understanding the task
2. outline/plan the general framework of your essay
3. brainstorm/generate as many ideas as possible
4. organize and classify the ideas generated in the previous stage

In the post-writing stage, remember the following:

- All your sentences have subjects and verbs.
- All your sentences start with a capital letter and finish in a full-stop.
- Long sentences should be avoided in order not to lose control of them. If they are long, divide/break them down into two.
- Your answer should be divided into paragraphs.
- Each paragraph is about one central idea, which is developed by things like quotations, examples, and details.
- Transition words should also be used for more cohesion.
- Do not use contractions. Write full forms.
- All your sentences should make sense. Simply imagine yourself as the reader.
- For the introduction & conclusion of Task1, make sure you write an overview/general sentence about the whole chart.
- For the introduction & conclusion of Task2, make sure you state your position/opinion about the topic.
- In order to make sure that you give the proper time to each task, start with Task2 rather than Task1.
- Use brackets for categories mentioned in charts and graphs.

4- Tips on the IELTS Listening Section

- Do not give more than one answer in a gap. Otherwise, it will be marked as wrong.
- If you are unsure of the spelling of a word, write an approximation of the way the answer sounds. Sometimes you can copy it from the exam booklet itself.
- Listen to the instructions because they tell you which questions you should read before listening and answer while listening.
- In order not to stay focused, try to listen ‘actively’, i.e. predict what you are going to listen to especially the answers. Most mistakes are made because of the lack of focus.
- In labeling questions, following both the question and the chart might be confusing. You just need to follow the number or the letter logically in order not to be lost or confused.
- Do not use the time between sections to transfer your answers because there will be 10 minutes at the end to transfer them.
- Listen in chunks. It is not necessary to understand every single word to be able to answer the questions.
- Practice listening through the media like watching the BBC. This is important not only to develop your listening skill but also to develop your language in general.
- In gap-filling questions, be aware that some of the answers may come quickly one after the other.
- Check that your answers are given in grammatically correct English. For example, if there is the article ‘a’ before the gap, it means that you have

to supply the answer in singular form. If not, it means that the answer will be either plural or an uncountable noun.

- In multiple-choice questions, before the passage is played, or as you listen, circle the topic of each question in order to stay focused.
- Pay attention to capital letters like names of people, months, places (hotels, cities, countries, etc.)
- In almost every IELTS listening test, you have to write dates at least once. The simplest way to write a date is to write the number and the month as in (15 July).
- If you miss something, do not worry. Otherwise, you will miss other things.
- Always write numbers as figures rather than letters in order to save time and to avoid spelling mistakes.
- While listening and answering, it is not necessary to write the words in full. This will help you save time to focus on answering the other questions. Your exam booklet will not be marked.
- In labeling questions, following both the question and the chart might be confusing. You just need to follow the number or the letter logically in order not to be lost or confused.
- When writing down letters, do not confuse them such as (k & q), (j & g), etc.
- If you see a complicated question, spend the time given to look at questions in order to examine it carefully.
- Make sure that you include the suitable units if not included in the answer sheet. Examples of units are like cm, \$, am, pm, etc.

- If you need to write one of the letters that have similar forms in both capital and small cases (like k and K, c and C), make sure that they are big enough, etc.
- A common mistake is confusing 80 with 90, 18th with 19th, etc.
- While listening and following on the exam sheet, you need to be patient and not to hurry things up writing down the first possible answer you hear. Often the speaker changes his or her mind and makes a correction before giving the answer that you need or someone else corrects him/her.
- Capitalize the names of sections/departments related to institutions like (Computer Lab, Students' Toilet, Staff Room, etc.
- The example done at the beginning of each IELTS listening question can be useful as an example of how to write the rest of the answers like whether to capitalize or not.
- When the speaker is about to say a number or the spelling of a proper noun, get ready to listen carefully and write quickly.
- In both reading and listening, you should consider the following when transferring answers into the answer sheet
 - Spelling
 - Grammar
 - Transferring the answers to their correct places

5- Tips on the IELTS Speaking Section

- Questions are in the form of yes/no questions, but they are not. You always need to expand by giving details, justifications, and examples.
- Prepare several stories that can be fitted into different questions.
- Try to give examples from things you are familiar with and easy for you to talk about in English
- The speaking section is not a test of your general knowledge; rather, it is a test of your English. That is why do not care about getting the right ideas because this might affect your fluency.