

IELTS SYLLABUS

There are two types of the IELTS test: IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training. Listening and Speaking are the same for both tests, but the subject matter of the Reading and Writing components differs depending on which test you take.

The Listening, Reading and Writing components of all IELTS tests are completed on the same day, with no breaks in between them.

The Speaking component, however, can be completed up to a week before or after the other tests. Your test centre will advise.

The total test time is 2 hours and 45 minutes.

Test format – Listening (30 minutes)

You will listen to four recordings of native English speakers and then write your answers to a series of questions.

- Recording 1 – a conversation between two people set in an everyday social context.
- Recording 2 - a monologue set in an everyday social context, e.g. a speech about local facilities.
- Recording 3 – 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.
- Recording 4 - a monologue on an academic subject, e.g. a university lecture.

Assessors will be looking for evidence of your ability to understand the main ideas and detailed factual information, the opinions and attitudes of speakers, the purpose of an utterance and evidence of your ability to follow the development of ideas.

IELTS Listening description Paper format	<p>There are four sections with ten questions each. The questions are designed so that the answers appear in the order they are heard in the audio.</p> <p>The first two sections deal with situations set in everyday social contexts. In Section 1, there is a conversation between two speakers (for example, a conversation about travel arrangements), and in Section 2, there is a monologue in (for example, a speech about local facilities). The final two sections deal with situations set in educational and training contexts. In Section 3, there is a conversation between two main speakers (for example, two university students in discussion, perhaps guided by a tutor), and in Section 4, there is a monologue on an academic subject.</p> <p>The recordings are heard only once. They include a range of accents, including British, Australian, New Zealand, American and Canadian.</p>
Timing	Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes transfer time).
No. of questions	40
Task types	A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labelling, form/note/table/flow-chart/summary completion, sentence completion.
Answering	Test takers write their answers on the question paper as they listen and at the end of the test are given 10 minutes to transfer their answers to an answer sheet. Care should be taken when writing answers on the answer sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalised.
Marks	Each question is worth 1 mark.

Test format – Reading (Academic)

60 minutes

The Reading component consists of 40 questions, designed to test a wide range of reading skills. These include reading for gist, reading for main ideas, reading for detail, skimming, understanding logical argument and recognizing writers' opinions, attitudes and purpose.

IELTS Academic test - this includes three long texts which range from the descriptive and factual to the discursive and analytical. These are taken from books, journals, magazines and newspapers. They have been selected for a non-specialist audience but are appropriate for people entering university courses or seeking professional registration.

IELTS Academic Reading description

Paper format	Three reading passages with a variety of questions using a number of task types.
Timing	60 minutes
No. of questions	40
Task types	A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following; multiple choice, identifying information, identifying the writer's views/claims, matching information, matching headings, matching features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, diagram label completion and short-answer questions.
Sources	Texts are taken from books, journals, magazines and newspapers, and have been written for a non-specialist audience. All the topics are of general interest. They deal with issues which are interesting, recognisably appropriate and accessible to test takers entering undergraduate or postgraduate courses or seeking professional registration. The passages may be written in a variety of styles, for example narrative, descriptive or discursive/argumentative. At least one text contains detailed logical argument. Texts may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts contain technical terms a simple glossary is provided.
Answering	Test takers are required to transfer their answers to an answer sheet during the time allowed for the test. No extra time is allowed for transfer. Care should be taken when writing answers on the answer sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalized.

Marks	Each question is worth 1 mark.
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Test format – Reading (General)

60 minutes

The Reading component consists of 40 questions, designed to test a wide range of reading skills. These include reading for gist, reading for main ideas, reading for detail, skimming, understanding logical argument and recognizing writers' opinions, attitudes and purpose.

IELTS General Training test - this includes extracts from books, magazines, newspapers, notices, advertisements, company handbooks and guidelines. These are materials you are likely to encounter on a daily basis in an English-speaking environment.

IELTS General Training Reading description

Paper format	There are three sections. Section 1 may contain two or three short texts or several shorter texts. Section 2 comprises two texts. In Section 3, there is one long text.
Timing	60 minutes
No. of questions	40
Task types	A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, identifying information, identifying writer’s views/claims, 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.
Sources	The first section, ‘social survival’, contains texts relevant to basic linguistic survival in English with tasks mainly about retrieving and providing general factual information, for example, notices, advertisements and timetables. The second section, ‘Workplace survival’, focuses on the workplace context, for example, job descriptions, contracts and staff development and training materials. The third section, ‘general reading’, involves reading more extended prose with a more complex structure. Here, the emphasis is on descriptive and instructive rather than argumentative texts, in a general context relevant to the wide range of test takers involved, for example, newspapers, magazines and fictional and non-fictional

Paper format	There are three sections. Section 1 may contain two or three short texts or several shorter texts. Section 2 comprises two texts. In Section 3, there is one long text.
	book extracts.
Answering	Test takers are required to transfer their answers to an answer sheet during the time allowed for the test. No extra time is allowed for transfer. Care should be taken when writing answers on the answer sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalized.
Marks	Each question is worth 1 mark.

Test format – Academic Writing

60 minutes

Topics are of general interest to, and suitable for, test takers entering undergraduate and postgraduate studies or seeking professional registration. There are two tasks:

- **Task 1** - you will be presented with a graph, table, chart or diagram and asked to describe, summarise 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.
- **Task 2** - you will be asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. Responses to both tasks must be in a formal style.

IELTS Academic Writing description

Paper format	There are two Writing tasks and BOTH must be completed.
Timing	60 minutes
No. of questions	2

Paper format	There are two Writing tasks and BOTH must be completed.
Task types	In Task 1, test takers are asked to describe some visual information (graph/table/chart/diagram) in their own words. They need to write 150 words in about 20 minutes. In Task 2, they respond to a point of view or argument or problem. They need to write 250 words in about 40 minutes.
Answering	Answers must be given on the answer sheet and must be written in full. Notes or bullet points are not acceptable as answers. Test takers may write on the question paper but this cannot be taken from the examination room and will not be seen by the examiner.

Test format – General Training Writing

60 minutes

Topics are of general interest. There are two tasks:

- **Task 1** - you will be presented with a situation and asked to write a letter requesting information, or explaining the situation. The letter may be personal, semi-formal or formal in style.
- **Task 2** - you will be asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem. The essay can be fairly personal in style.

IELTS General Training Writing description

Paper format	There are two Writing tasks to complete.
Timing	60 minutes
No. of questions	2
Task types	In Task 1, test takers are asked to respond to a situation, for example, by writing letter requesting information or explaining a situation.

Paper format	There are two Writing tasks to complete.
	In Task 2, test takers write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem.
Answering	Answers must be written in full in the answer booklet. Notes or bullet points in whole or in part are not acceptable as answers. Test takers may write on the question paper but this cannot be taken from the test room and will not be seen by the examiner.

Test format – Speaking

11–14 minutes

The speaking component assesses your use of spoken English. Every test is recorded.

- **Part 1** - The examiner will ask you general questions about yourself and a range of familiar topics, such as home, family, work, studies and interests. This part lasts between four and five minutes.
- **Part 2** - You will be given a card which asks you to talk about a particular topic. You will have one minute to prepare before speaking for up to two minutes. The examiner will then ask one or two questions on the same topic.
- **Part 3** - You will be asked further questions about the topic in Part 2. These will give you the opportunity to discuss more abstract ideas and issues. This part of the test lasts between four and five minutes.

IELTS Speaking description

Paper format	The Speaking test consists of an oral interview between the test takers' and an examiner. All Speaking tests are recorded.
Timing	11–14 minutes
Task types	There are three parts to the test and each part fulfills a specific function in terms of interaction pattern, task input and test takers output.