

http://www.ieltsessentials.com/results/assessment_criteria.aspx

http://www.ielts-exam.net/writing/IELTS_Graph_Dramatic_fall/487/

Examiner-approved tips to support you

Perform your best in each section of the IELTS test with these few tips. Download the [full examiner-approved tips help sheet](#).

Listening

1. At the beginning of each section read the questions carefully before the recording starts. This will help you to follow the recording and identify the answers.
2. Listen carefully for clues that indicate which stage of the recording you are listening to –for example, words such as ‘firstly’, ‘my next point’, ‘to sum up’. These words will help you identify which question you have reached.

Reading

1. To improve your performance in the Reading test you need to practise by reading a variety of English texts. This will help you develop the ability to read quickly as required under test conditions.
2. The texts included in the Reading test *always* contain the information you need to answer the question. You won’t have to use your own knowledge of a topic.

Writing

1. Be careful to use your own words. The examiner will not include words copied from the question in the word count.
2. Make your position or point of view as clear as possible in your essay for Academic Writing Task 2. Your last paragraph should be a conclusion which is consistent with the arguments you have included in your essay.

Speaking

1. In the lead up to the Speaking test, make sure you take the time to practise speaking English – with friends, at work and on the phone. You should also consider recording yourself, so that you are more confident when speaking English during your test.
2. There are no right or wrong answers in the Speaking test. The examiner will assess you on how well you can express your ideas and opinions in good English.

Common myths about the IELTS test

You might hear all sorts of claims about the IELTS test. Be wary about accepting them all as true – there are a lot of myths being said about the test.

You must also be aware of scams offering IELTS information. One recent scam asks you to phone China on +86 950 xxxx xxx xxxx. When you phone this number, AUD\$100 may be billed to your phone account and your SIM card may also be erased. Please share this warning with your friends.

Instead of listening to these false claims about the test, the best thing you could do is to concentrate on improving your English proficiency and follow the preparation advice we provide on this website.

Some other myths to look out for:

IELTS is too difficult.

IELTS is no more difficult than any other exam. The questions are straightforward and designed to assess how well you can use your English – not to trick you or test your opinions. As with any exam, IELTS requires thorough preparation.

Also, remember that there is no pass or fail in IELTS. The results are reported on a 9-band scale (1 being the lowest, 9 being the highest). This scale has remained consistent for over 20 years.

The score you need is determined by the requirements of your visa or the institution/ organisation to which you are applying. Always remember to check what score you need before you take the test.

If I sit the test in my home country, I might get a better result.

This is a common myth. However it is important to understand that the IELTS test will be the same level of difficulty wherever you sit the test. Think about where you will feel most confident taking the test.

It is important to recognise that good meals and good sleep in the lead-up to your test will help you perform your best. Also consider how early you need to travel on test day to reach the test centre.

Keep in mind that all IELTS examiners in each country receive the same high level of training and are closely monitored to ensure they rate your responses consistently wherever you sit the test.

If I smile and make the examiner laugh in my Speaking test, I may get a better mark.

Smiling can help you feel relaxed which in turn might help you perform better.

Every examiner is trained and monitored closely to be fair to every candidate and assess your level of English only. The examiners will not give you more or fewer marks if you are smiling and laughing.

I will lose marks if I don't speak with an Australian, American or British accent.

You are not expected to change your accent for the IELTS test. Instead, focus on speaking clearly and at a natural pace so that the examiner can understand you. Practising your English every day and listening to different native speaker accents will help you to more clearly pronounce difficult words.

If I write more than the word limit in my Writing test, I will get more marks.

The minimum word limit is important. You must write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2. If you write less than this, you will lose marks. However if you write more, this does not mean you will gain marks. Rather it is more important that you use correct English, appropriate grammar, a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures.

If the opinions I express in my Writing or Speaking test are different to the examiner, I might lose marks.

In your Writing and Speaking test, there are no right or wrong opinions. The examiner is assessing how well you can use your English to report information and express ideas.

If I keep practising sample questions, I will get a better band score.

Practising sample tests will help you learn what is expected in each part of the test. This is good test preparation in order to maximise the English skills you have. However, remember that to improve your English you need to use English in everyday contexts – speak it with your friends, write notes and email in English, read English newspapers, listen to English radio.

If you feel you need help with your English, you should also consider taking an English course.

I've heard it is easy to cheat at IELTS.

IELTS is protected by sophisticated and multi-layered security measures to prevent cheating in order to protect you and the organisations that accept your results. At registration the following identity checks are taken:

- Your photograph is taken and your finger is scanned when you register or arrive for the test. This photograph and fingerscan is used to ensure that the same person sits every part of the test.
- Identity checks are also undertaken during the Reading and Writing test and again on check-in for the Speaking test.
- All test materials are collected, checked against registration and seat details and double-counted before test takers are released from their test session.
- All test centres are regularly monitored and audited.
- Test papers are printed on high-security paper and distributed automatically to test centres without human intervention.
- Every test paper includes a unique combination of questions – no two tests are the same.
- Systems are in place to automatically and routinely scrutinise test results. In the event that any anomaly is identified, the candidate, Test Centre and any organisation that has been sent the result are notified and appropriate action is taken which may include cancellation of an individual's result.
- IELTS makes it easy for universities, employers and government to check the validity of results at any time, using a secure verification system.
- Any malpractice, which includes getting somebody else to sit the test on your behalf, will result in being disqualified from the test. Details of the malpractice will also be passed on to any organisations to which you have applied, including relevant visa processing authorities.

For a full list of terms and conditions please refer to the [IELTS Application Form](#).

IELTS is harder than other English tests.

Thousands of educational institutions, employers and professional registration bodies accept IELTS because it is a high quality and fair test. This is why IELTS is also accepted by more governments for migration purposes than any other test.

The institution/organisation to which you are applying will determine the level of English you need.