



Teaching IELTS for Positive
Results

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TEACHING IELTS FOR POSITIVE RESULTS

This course will equip TEFL teachers with foundational knowledge, methods and materials enabling them to empower serious students to achieve their goal of a high IELTS band score.

Teaching IELTS is an intensive and rewarding undertaking. There is no greater privilege than enabling second language English students to savour the richness of the English language.

Good IELTS teachers create a learning environment, where committed students obtain second language skills that open study and career doors of the highest level.

Teaching English at this level is similar to a University MA course. Please ensure your ss (students) take the responsibility to self-study and to learn outside of class. Without this self-motivation ss will struggle to reach that critical breakthrough needed to get a high score.

Hopefully, this course will be an added tool in the arsenal of every teacher engaged in effective IELTS preparation classes.

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INTRODUCTION:

After many years of teaching IELTS preparation, I am still grateful for lessons learned from second language speakers during tuition classes! **“Effective teachers are also persistent learners.”** Staying just six weeks ahead of your students will keep you fresh and in touch with the new materials and aware of potential difficulties.

Each lesson demands that our facilitation of the preparation process remains undergirded by the phrase, **“Be Prepared.”** Expect lessons to go well, but also be prepared for times that they don't. Likewise, if others are teaching the same subject, have a backup lesson for when your students tell you, “We did that lesson last week, with Mr Smith.”

ASSESSMENT:

“You have to know where you are before you can plan to get to where you want to go.”

As in all classroom allocation, IELTS students need to be assessed before placing them in the ideal class which is best suited to their skill levels.

Students have stronger skills in different subjects; some will be natural speakers; other quieter ones, may do better in reading. So one way, not the only way, would be to start teaching by bringing all of your students together for three weeks and teach them IELTS at around the band 5.5 levels. This initial three week period, will allow the students time to settle in, and give you time to see how they handle the materials.

After this initial period, arrange a mock test to see where they really are, so you can form a further six-week development programme for them at the appropriate level. In addition, a mock will give you information to be able to decide whether the group needs to be separated into a lower and advanced class. Trying to teach levels beyond what the students can be reasonably expected to cope with, will end in frustration for all concerned.

Regular mock tests at the end of a six-week programme will give you much needed feedback and highlight where individual students need to apply more effort.

Moreover, regular mocks prepare the students for some of the stresses and strains the real exam will most certainly bring.

If you type, "IELTS band descriptors," in your search engine it will turn up several places where the British Council and their partners have established learner skill expectations and scored them accordingly. There is an example in the supplementary section. Using these recognized measuring aids will help you establish the appropriate level for your students and guide you in your choice of teaching materials.

Be informed

In addition to the numerous good quality course books, there are many Internet links, with a host of helpful ideas and materials-many of them free, that can really help IELTS teachers understand what needs to be taught and how to teach it in the classroom. Below are just a few of the many good ones;

<http://www.ieltshelpnow.com/index.html>

<http://www.ielts-exam.ieltslttcaug0810net/index.php>

<http://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts>

<http://www.ielts.org/default.aspx>

<http://www.cambridgeesol.org/assets/pdf/ielts-research-faqs.pdf>

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

Question: What is IELTS?

Answer: IELTS is an acronym for International English Language Testing System. IELTS is designed to assess the language ability of individuals who want to study or work effectively in countries where English is the language of communication. IELTS conforms to the highest international standards of language assessment and is an accredited testing system of the English capabilities of non-English speakers. IELTS is recognised for course admission by universities in many countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the UK and some universities in the USA, and is increasing in usage in Germany and the wider confines of Europe. IELTS is also required as proof of language abilities for immigration to Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Question: Is IELTS the only international English language testing system?

Answer: No, it is not. There are also the American based and designed TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) systems. However, TOEFL is not accepted for Indian students wishing to enter Australia and the American testing systems are not accepted in some universities committed only to the IELTS system.

Question: Is IELTS better than the other systems?

Answer: IELTS was designed by United Kingdom and Australian Universities and is widely accepted in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and some universities in the United States of America. IELTS uses British rather than American English. IELTS is not a rote-based learning system (as are TOEIC and TOEFL) but requires that students understand and analyse English. In this sense, it is a better system to test language acquisition. Certainly IELTS academic is essential, for overseas students wishing to obtain British university degrees.

Question: Who conducts IELTS tests in the United Kingdom?

Answers: The British Council gives accreditation to test centres and examiners. Centres may be at colleges, universities or on British Council premises.

Question: Is there just one kind of IELTS testing system?

Answer: No, candidates can opt for the Academic or the General tests. The former is for university level admission and the latter for most non-academic level requirements. The overall methodology for IELTS instruction in this Manual can be applied to General IELTS preparation as well. The General Training test is for those who want to do work experience or training programs, secondary school or migrate to an English-speaking country. All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking tests but different Reading and Writing tests.

Question: How long does the band score remain valid?

Answer: If the successful candidate does not use their IELTS qualification within two years, they will have to retake the test. In the United Kingdom, most IELTS tests taken are for the purpose of university admission. Once admitted to a university, the IELTS test will never need repeating.

Question: Can a test be taken again if not successful the first time?

Answer yes, under the revised rules it is now possible to retake a test without having to wait for three months before trying again.

Question: How much does it cost for the test? How much time does it take?

Answer: The test fee changes from year to year and is currently (2010) £110.00. The actual period depends on each test centre. They will advise their timetable but the total test is 2 hours and 45 minutes and is usually split into different periods.

Question: What do IELTS band scores mean?

Answer: Candidates are tested in Reading (60 minutes), Listening (30 minutes), Writing (60 minutes) and Speaking (around 15 minutes). Examiners will send their assessments for verification and the final band scores will reflect the candidate's competency in each of the four areas. Scoring will be given for each module and then averaged out. Some universities, for example, require a minimum band score for speaking to be 7.5 and might ask for an average band score of 7.5. Each university has their own admission standard, but in many cases a score of 6.5 will enable students to go on to most university courses. The maximum band score is 9.

Question: How do I best prepare myself to teach IELTS to candidates?

Answers:

The task of the tutor is to prepare candidates for the IELTS test and not to teach them English! Students should be at least at the Intermediate level of English language acquisition. You will augment and teach during the preparation process, but the mechanics of the IELTS preparation (tactics) is your main concern.

Visit a well-stocked bookstore and buy a Manual or two on IELTS Practice Tests. Manuals cover both academic and general preparation methodologies.

Access a good search engine. Search for “ielts preparation”; ielts tests; teaching ielts and so on. Read, mark and digest! There is a huge library of excellent materials riding the ether waves – and free at that! Save in your favourite’s file.

Similarly, conduct an Internet search on “ielts test centres uk” – if you are outside the United Kingdom then adjust your search accordingly. Read, mark and digest! Save in your favourite’s file.

Be prepared by reading thoroughly all general course information and, as appropriate, make summary notes in your IELTS Preparation File so that you cement professionally your own learning process and will be able to field most questions asked by candidates. Preparation for individual modules will be dealt with later – one mountain at a time!

Approach your student group in the role of Coach as much as Teacher. Please understand that preparing your students for the emotional challenges of the test, is just as important as raising their language skill levels.

Put yourself through a simulated test every six weeks and have a colleague assess your level. This will keep you up to date with the pressures your students face and may reveal areas where you will want to rethink your teaching methods.

Having laid some foundational key points, let’s take a look at some real materials and subject skills.

CHAPTER 2

READING

IELTS ACADEMIC READING TEST TUTORIAL *(Copy for ss handout)*

The Test Format

The IELTS Academic Reading Test has 3 sections. You have 60 minutes to complete the test. There is NO extra time at the end of the test to transfer your answers to the answer paper (you get 10 extra minutes in the listening test only); your answers must be on the answer paper at the end of the 60 minutes. The test has 40 questions based on a series of 3 texts. The total length of all the texts put together will be between 2000 and 2750 words. As in all the different parts of IELTS, the Academic Reading Test gets progressively harder through the paper. In each section of the Academic Reading Test there will be 1 text with 13 or maybe 14 questions to answer in 2 or 3 sets of differing formats. We will look at the types of question that you will meet later. The texts will come from magazines, books and journals and are written for general interest or for an academic though non-specialist reader. At least one text will contain a logical argument. One text may contain non-verbal materials such as a diagram, graph or illustration. If there are any words or terms of a specialist technical nature which candidates would not be expected to know, then a short glossary will be provided.

Marking

There are 40 questions in the IELTS Academic Reading Test and 1 mark is awarded for each correct answer. There are no half marks. Your final mark out of 40 is then converted to a band from 1 - 9 using a converting table and this band is then averaged with the other 3 parts of the test to give your final IELTS band. Band scores for the reading test and the final band are given as a whole band or a half band. The converting table used to change your mark out of 40 to the band out of 9 changes with every test. However, below you can see a rough guide that you can use to assess your practice. There is no guarantee that you will perform the same in the real test itself as the test converters vary with each test, but it can be a guide to your progress.

IELTS Academic Reading Test Marks, Bands and Results - Rough Guide Converter

Score	Band
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	1
1	2
2-3	3
4-9	4
10-15	5
16-22	6
23-28	7
29-35	8
36-38	9
39-40	

IELTS Academic Reading Test Question Types

Below is a list of the types of question that you could meet in the IELTS Academic Reading Test. It's useful to read the list of course, but the only way to really be familiar with the types of question is through practice.

- Multiple choice questions
- Short answer questions
- Completion questions: Completing sentences
- Completing notes
- Completing a summary (no word bank)
- Completing a summary (with word bank)
- Completing a diagram
- Completing a flow chart
- Completing a table
- Matching a bank of headings to identify paragraphs or parts of text
- Matching a bank of writers' views/claims/information with the writer
- Identification of information in the text: yes/no/not given questions
- true/false/not given questions
- Matching lists/phrases
- Classification questions

Some tips for students:

Don't spend too long on a single question as that will lose you time for answering questions that could be easier for you. Sometimes leaving a question and coming back later can help you answer it too. Leave any questions that you have spent too long on, and come back at the end of the test if you have time. Sometimes, if the question has a yes/no/not given answer, the answer you are looking for does not exist as it could be a not given. Be aware so you don't waste time looking for something that isn't there.

Read the questions and instructions so you don't make a silly mistake. For example, people often will mix the yes/no answers with the true/false answers and write yes as an answer instead of true or vice versa. Strictly speaking you are wrong although you have understood the question and answer.

If the question asks for one answer then give one answer. Giving two is wrong as it asks for one and you will be marked wrong. The type of question where this could happen would be: Give one example of... *Writing two examples, to show you really understand, is wrong.*

If the question asks for no more than 3 words, use no more than 3 words. *Writing 4 words or more is wrong.* You won't be asked to do it in 3 words or less unless it is possible so don't worry; it can always be done.

One area that students don't like is that, in the reading test, good grammar and spelling are important. The grammar part is not as important as you can't make many grammar errors in 3 words (the maximum you use in the reading test) but, if you spell something wrong, it will be marked as wrong. People think, quite rightly in my opinion, that the reading should test whether you understand what you read and not how you spell something but these are the rules. So, be careful about your spelling!

One constant discussion I have had with students is whether to read the questions first and then read the passage or read the passage first and then the questions. From my experience with many students my conclusion is that there is no correct answer for this. It depends on a number of variables. It can depend on the types of question and how difficult the questions are. It can depend on how good and fast a reader you are. It can depend on the length of the text and how much time you have. Let's look at these variables. Maybe try both ways-read first and then do the questions; then another time look at the questions first.

If the question type is difficult and asking something which is hard to answer then reading the text first can help. Just a quick read through using a technique called skimming (see below for an analysis of skimming) can give you the knowledge of the text that will help you find the answer more easily.

If you are a good, fast reader, then you can read the text quickly, getting good knowledge of the contents without using up too much precious time. This can help you answer the questions better.

If the texts are short then it doesn't take long to quickly read through them. On the other hand, if the texts are short it is easier to find the answers so you may not have to waste time reading the texts to find the answers quickly, especially if time is short.

If time is short then it doesn't matter how complex or long the texts are. You need to get some answers on the answer sheet as quickly as possible. So, you can see that there is not one answer to the problem of whether to read the texts or questions first. What I tell students is to experiment in your practice and see what suits you for the different types of question in different situations. As usual practising your techniques is the key.

Time management is an important thing to be aware of. You have a number of texts to read and 40 questions to answer in 1 hour. If you spend too long on one part, you may find that you have not enough time to finish all the questions and some of those questions could be ones that you could answer quite easily. As I said above, don't spend too long on a difficult answer but also keep an eye on the clock. It's a good idea to have your watch or a small clock on your desk so you know exactly how long you have left in the test at any given time. In addition to this, keep control on how long you spend on each section. Remember the test gets more difficult as it goes on so you will probably need more time for the questions at the end than for those at the start. Maybe a guideline could be:

17 minutes on section 1.

20 minutes on section 2.

23 minutes on section 3.

(If you can do things more quickly all the better as that will give you time to look at questions that you skipped and to check on your answers)

With experience and practice you will soon know how long things take you, and be able to manage your time well.

As I just said, if you have finished the exam with time to spare, DON'T just sit there!! Check what you have done. If you have time after the check, check again. And so on....

Reading Techniques - Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning are the two main techniques that people use to read and answer IELTS reading tests. It's not a question of using one or the other but you will need both methods in doing the test. Let's have a look at the two techniques in turn.

Skimming

Skimming is reading fast to get the "gist" or the general idea of the text. There are different techniques of doing skimming. You can run your eyes over the text getting the general meaning, not stopping at words that you don't understand as this will

slow you down. The important thing with skimming is speed. Another way to skim is to just read the first and last paragraphs of a text and summarise the main points. You could also just read the title, subtitles and illustrations if there are any. I prefer for IELTS the first way - reading it all quickly to get the general meaning, but of course it depends on your reading speed. If you are a slow reader in English you really need to practise to improve. You don't need IELTS specific texts for this. A good English newspaper is fine. Get one every day and read the articles as quickly as you can. Do this with as many articles as possible every day and your speed will quickly improve.

Scanning

This is another very important technique for the IELTS Reading Tests. This is the technique that you use when you are reading a telephone book or a dictionary. You are not starting at the top and reading every line back and forth as you would read a novel. You are moving your eyes around the text, back and across and up and down. You are searching for some specific information: a word or name. This is an important technique in IELTS reading as you are often searching for some specific information. You read the question and then you search for key words or ideas associated with the question. This is a bit more difficult to practise than skimming. You get long texts (from newspapers, magazines or other sources) and get a friend to read it and then ask you to find key ideas or words as quickly as possible. Again, if you do this frequently, your speed will quickly improve.

If you want to improve, there's no secret. Practice. Practice. Practice. You won't get better sitting and doing nothing. Even good English users need practice for the IELTS exam. It could make all the difference between getting the band that you need, and getting half a band less than you need and having to do the exam again.

Finally, there are no correct answers or methods. Here I've given you some ideas to guide you and hopefully to help you but the questions can be answered well in different ways. Good luck with the IELTS Academic Reading Test! I hope that this tutorial has helped you. Below are the links to the other free Academic tutorials.

Key thought: The teacher must teach the techniques to enable a candidate to tap their resources to achieve their highest potential possible in the one-hour reading test. Homework assignments testing the understanding of new vocabulary acquisition will be helpful.

Comment: The reading and writing modules are usually the most challenging. Some students may need to take time off less difficult modules to concentrate on those more difficult. This could be done through consultation.

Homework: Suggested homework assignments for candidates to complete and return. To research IELTS information on the Internet relevant to reading tests and tips and

to write sentences using the new vocabulary – to be handed in for marking at the next tutorial (marking for comprehension, syntax and spelling can take place whilst the candidates are reading the article and answering the questions). Appropriate comments to be noted on each homework assignment sheet and returned to the candidate. Checking vocabulary comprehension testing assignments for subsequent homework assignments is helpful to the learning process.

Self-Study: *In addition to the usual homework tasks.* It is key essential to get students involved in building their own knowledge base. As many of the reading and writing articles will be on recent or current themes, it is very helpful for students to read newspaper articles outside of class. Arrange a weekly sharing session-maybe at the end of the week-and get ss to share with the class the main points of the topic.

Ask your students to look for reports on climate change and all the contributing areas, on education, society changes in recent times, energy sources. Exploration of places like the rainforests, the Polar Regions and different tribes still living in isolation will also add to their general understanding, vocabulary and gain an understanding of academic writing. The IELTS reading and writing skills are closely interrelated.

Pattern: Suggested pattern of instruction for class instruction

Each reading module comprises three sub-sections ... each allows 20 minutes of time.

Questions test comprehension and the ability to interpret English in context.

Allow two hours for the initial reading lesson of three sub-sections – a one-off.

Using yourself as a model, explain and demonstrate scan reading; skim reading; understanding the main concepts of a passage; what is meant by reading for detail and comprehending different opinions.

Ask candidates to demonstrate their understanding of each concept using the first 20-minute reading module as a pilot exercise. Repeat this exercise for each new class on reading. Reinforce the concepts.

Get each candidate to complete the first of the three-part reading exercise – timing strictly for 20 minutes.

Thereafter, complete the remaining sections and mark. Candidates must be enabled to identify their errors and, for homework do the corrections – self monitoring.

Total time = 120 minutes.

Preparation process – the second and third one-hour each reading sessions:

Remind candidates about scan reading; skim reading; understanding the main concepts of a passage; what is meant by reading for detail and comprehending different opinions.

Explain, using examples, how skimming and scanning enable the answering of questions. A good example of skimming is how we use newspapers. We seldom read, word for word, from the first to the last article. No, most people will just glance the main points on the various pages; we call this skimming. Then, having found what they want to read the details of, they will read and remember the facts within this section; scanning.

Multiple choice questions

matching opinions and phrases

completing a table

labelling a diagramme

Get each candidate to complete the three lessons within / around the 20-minute time limitations for each. Explain that they should first complete answer questions they feel comfortable with and then return to those more difficult.

Thereafter, complete the remaining sections and mark using group involvement and participation. Candidates must be able to identify their errors and, for homework do the corrections – self monitoring.

Preparation process – the third and fourth one-hour each reading sessions:

Remind candidates about scan reading; skim reading; understanding the main concepts of a passage; what is meant by reading for detail and comprehending different opinions.

Remind candidates how skimming and scanning enable the answering of ...

multiple choice questions

matching opinions and phrases

completing a table

labelling a diagramme

Get each candidate to complete the three lessons within / around the 20-minute time limitations for each. Explain that they should first complete answer questions they feel comfortable with and then return to those more difficult.

Thereafter, using sub-group involvement, complete the remaining sections and mark. Candidates must be able to identify their errors within the group and get groups to deduce answers as appropriate. Monitored peer-to-peer correction, support and marking

Key thoughts: The teacher must teach the techniques to enable candidates to follow and to tap their resources to achieve their highest potential possible in the one-hour writing test. Homework assignments testing the understanding of new vocabulary acquisition, correct syntax and accurate spelling will be helpful.

The emphasis on writing clear, formal English must incorporate the abilities of the candidate to complete the given task appropriately; organise and link their ideas clearly; write legibly using also a good range of vocabulary. Spelling is important.

Overview: Suggested tutorial period to complete the module = six hours, divided into six one-hour sessions spread out over six different days / weeks.

Writing modules demand that a candidate is able to interpret data from a pie chart, bar chart or linear chart. Importantly, the interpretation must be what the graph depicts – accuracy and relevancy of interpretation is essential (no assumptions or projections!); overall trends rather than details must be noted; appropriate vocabulary must be used.

Examiners will look for evidence that the candidate can group information; link points in complex sentences and use appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures for describing trends.

Group: Suggested ideal group size of 12. This group composition should make sharing between 2,3,4 or 6 students interesting and effective.

Comment: The writing and reading modules are usually the most challenging. Some students may need to take time off less difficult modules to concentrate on those more difficult. This could be done through consultation.

Homework: Suggested homework assignments for candidates should comprise exercises to demonstrate an understanding of, and ability to, complete successful the concepts noted under *Overview*.

As an aside, remember that as the tutor you are perceived as the expert in the field. Ensure that you have researched thoroughly the relevant details before teaching the class and model by example your knowledge during each lesson.

Task One

Vocabulary for line graphs:

It is essential that teachers search out the descriptive vocabulary for task one writing and create comprehensive handouts, for students to be able to relate to and describe movements and pictorial statistical graphs.

Here is just one helpful handout.

Describing trends:

Trends are changes or movements. These changes are normally expressed in numeric items, for example, population, production volumes or unemployment. There are three basic trends:



Expressing movement: nouns and verbs



For each trend there are a number of verbs and nouns to express the movement. We can use a verb of change, for example:

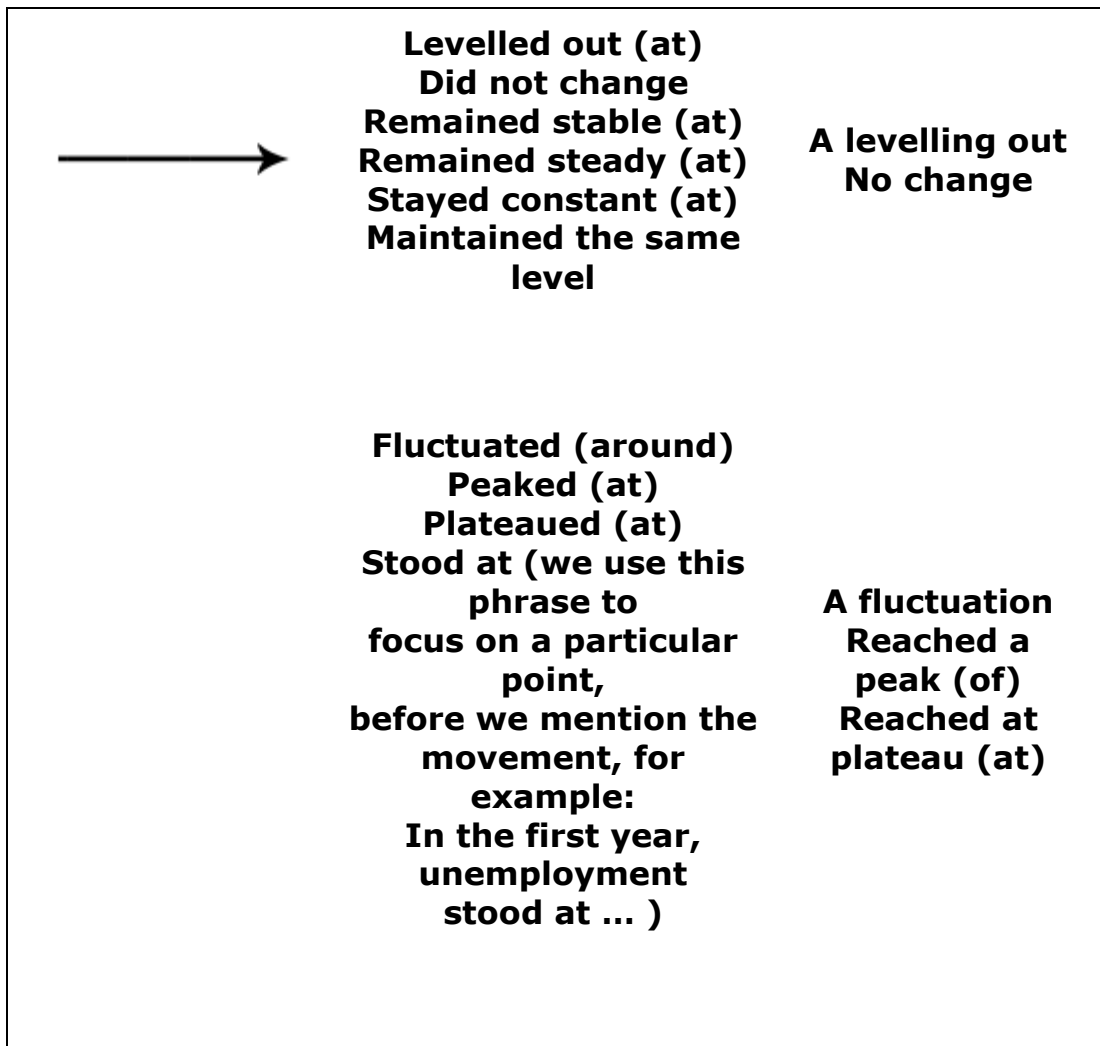
Unemployment levels fell

Or we can use a related noun, for example:

There was a fall in unemployment levels

There was a fall in unemployment levels

	Rose (to) Increased (to) Went up (to) Climbed (to) Boomed	A rise An increase Growth An upward trend A boom (a dramatic rise)
	Fell (to) Declined (to) Decreased (to) Dipped (to) Dropped (to) Went down (to) Slumped (to) Reduced (to)	A decrease A decline A fall A drop A slump (a dramatic fall) A reduction



Describing the movement: adjectives and adverbs

Sometimes we need to give more information about a trend as follows:

There has been a slight increase in the value of the dollar (degree of change)

Unemployment fell rapidly last year (the speed of change)

Remember that we modify a noun with an adjective (a slight increase) and a verb with an adverb (to increase slightly).

Describing the degree of change

Adjectives	Adverbs
dramatic	dramatically

sharp	sharply
huge	
enormous	enormously
steep	steeply
substantial	substantially
considerable	considerably
significant	significantly
marked	markedly
moderate	moderately
slight	slightly
small	
minimal	minimally

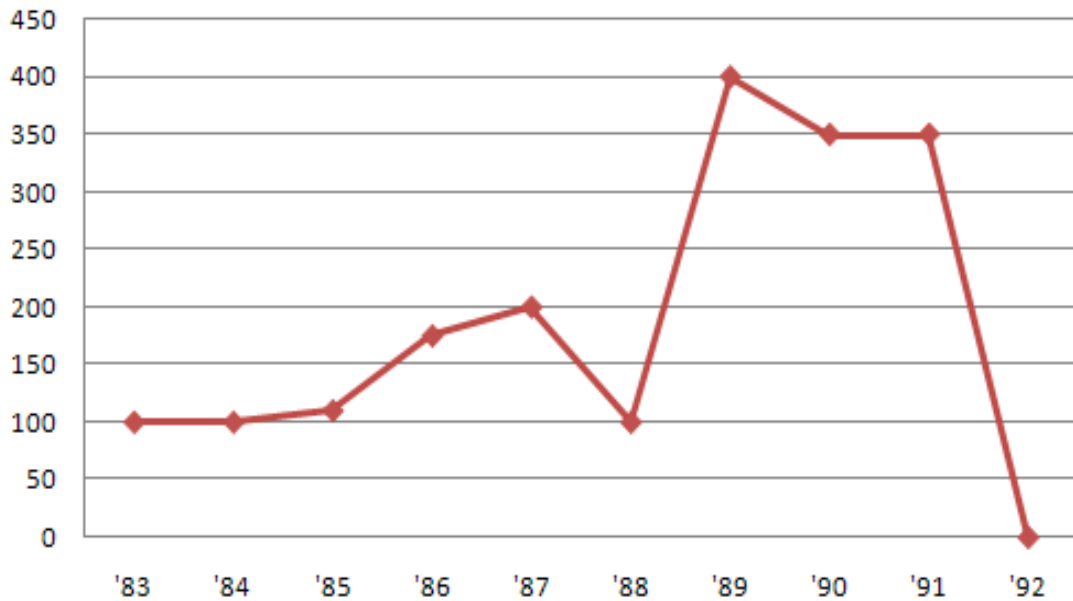
Describing the speed of change

Adjectives	Adverbs
rapid	rapidly
quick	quickly
swift	swiftly
sudden	suddenly
steady	steadily
gradual	gradually
slow	slowly

Use the following terms and any others necessary to describe the graph below.

initially, stood at, dip/dipped, peak/peaked, level/levelled out

Number of cases of X disease in Someland between 1983 - 1992



Describing a trend

We can describe a trend by looking at:

- the difference between two levels
- the end point of the trend

Describing the difference between two levels

This year unemployment has increased **by** 20,000 cases (the difference between this year and last year is 20,000 cases).

This year there has been an increase in unemployment **of** 5%.

Notice the prepositions. We use to increase **by** (with the verb) and an increase **of** (with the noun).

Describing the end point

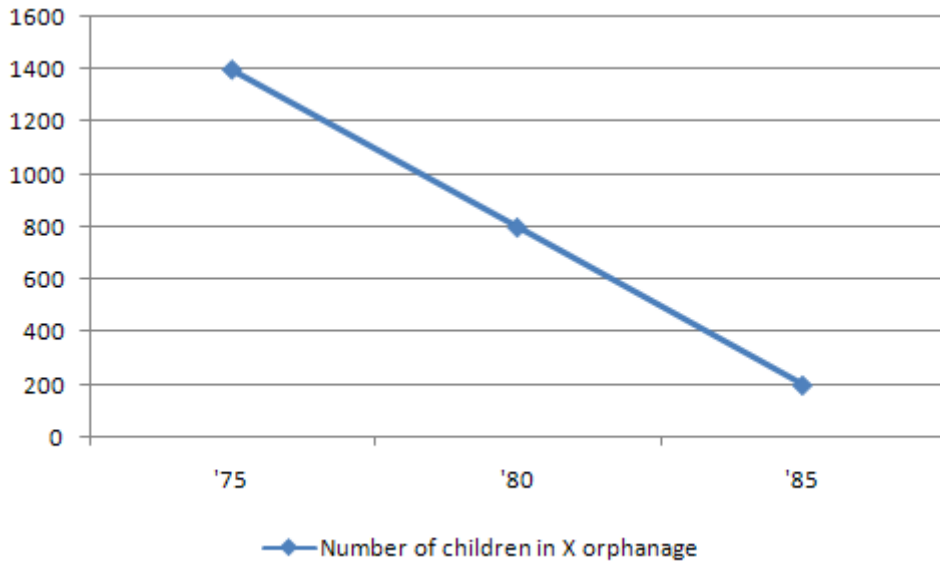
This year unemployment has risen to 10% (the end result is that unemployment is up to 10%).

This year there has been a rise in unemployment to 10%.

Notice the prepositions. We use to rise **to** (with the verb) and a rise **to** (with the noun).

Write 3 sentences describing the graph below using **by**, **of** and **to**.

Try the exercises below:



Expressing approximation

We use words to express approximation when the point we are trying to describe is between milestones on the graph.

<p>just under well under roughly approximately about</p>	<p>just over well over nearly around</p>
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Preparation process – the first and second one-hour each writing lessons:

1. Using yourself as a model, explain and demonstrate accuracy, relevant interpretation, the meaning of overall trends and the use of appropriate vocabulary using the first of the three modules of the initial lessons.
2. Ask candidates to demonstrate their understanding of each concept by repeating the first 20-minute writing module as a pilot exercise. Reinforce the concepts at the beginning of each lesson.
3. Get each candidate to complete the second and third parts of the three-part writing exercise – timing strictly for 20 minutes.
4. Thereafter, within groups, mark the answers. Candidates must be enabled to identify their errors and, for homework do the corrections – self monitoring.

Total time = 120 minutes.

Preparation process – for further lessons.

1. Remind candidates that writing modules demand that a candidate must be able to interpret data from a pie chart, bar chart or linear chart *and*
2. importantly, the interpretation must be what the graph depicts – accuracy and relevancy of interpretation is essential (no assumptions or projections!); overall trends rather than details must be noted; appropriate vocabulary must be used *and*
3. examiners will look for evidence that the candidate can group information; link points in complex sentences and use appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures for describing trends. Refer back to the initial lesson and the examples given.
4. Get each candidate to complete the three lessons within / around the 20-minute time limitations for each. Explain that they should first complete answer questions they feel comfortable with and then return to those more difficult.
5. Thereafter, complete the remaining sections and mark using group involvement and participation. Candidates must be able to identify their errors and, for homework do the corrections – self monitoring.

In the following sessions arrange a quiz; getting the ss to remind each other of the key points.

IELTS ACADEMIC WRITING TEST - TASK 2 (Teacher and ss)

Task 2 in the IELTS Academic Writing Test is more important than task 1. You have to write more, it's a more difficult task and it is worth more to your final band for writing as more weight is given to Task 2 than to Task 1.

The IELTS Academic Writing Test

The IELTS Academic Writing Test lasts for 1 hour and includes 2 tasks. Task 1 is a letter and you must write at least 150 words. You should spend about 20 minutes out of the hour for Task 1. Task 2 is an essay and you must write at least 250 words. You should spend about 40 minutes for Task 2.

The Task for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

The IELTS Academic Writing Task 2 asks you to write a short essay of a minimum of 250 words. The essay is usually a discussion of a subject of general interest. You will almost certainly, have to present and justify your opinion about something, give the solution to a problem or compare differing ideas or viewpoints.

Marking for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

Your task will be marked in three areas. You will get a mark from 1 to 9 on Arguments, Ideas and Evidence, Communicative Quality and Vocabulary and Sentence Structure. Your final band for Task 2 will be effectively an average of the three marks awarded in these areas. Task 2 writing is more important than Task 1 and to calculate the final writing mark, more weight is assigned to the Task 2 mark than to Task 1's mark. To get a good overall mark though, both tasks have to be well answered so don't hold back on Task 1 or give yourself too little time to answer it properly.

Arguments, Ideas and Evidence

The mark will be graded on the content of your essay. The argument is how you present your case as regards the question. The ideas part is how many and how good your ideas are in helping your argument. The evidence is the facts that you use to back up your ideas. Evidence is very important in Task 2. You need to bring in facts from your own experience in order to support your ideas. The three parts (Arguments, Ideas and Evidence) are not independent but blend together to give a good answer. Together they really present the content and substance of your essay.

Communicative Quality

This is how you are making yourself understood and whether the reader of your writing understands what you are saying. Are you communicating well with the reader and are your ideas that you want to present understood by the reader?

Vocabulary and Sentence Structure

This area looks at your grammar and choice of words. The marker will look at whether the right grammar and words are used and whether they are used at the right time, in the right place and in the right way. Most people are predominantly worried about their grammar but, as you can see, grammar is only half of one section of three used to grade your writing. **IELTS is much more interested in communication rather than grammatical accuracy.**

Paragraphing for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

This is a very easy thing to do but it can have an enormous effect on the clarity of your writing. I have said this for Task 1 but for Task 2 it's even more important. In Task 2 you will be writing more and it is therefore more important to divide your writing up into divisions to make it easier to read.

Very often people use no paragraphing and the examiner is faced with a "sea" of writing with no breaks from start to finish. For me, the best writings are those where there are paragraphs separated by an empty line as is the text of the paper. In this way your ideas are separated clearly. It shows and gives organization to your writing and makes it more readable.

For Task 2, have a paragraph break after your introduction, and then for every differing section of your separate ideas with the supporting evidence. Then have a final paragraph for your conclusion. You should aim to have 3 or 4 paragraphs plus the introduction and conclusion.

Look at this section on paragraphing. It is divided into 5 separate paragraphs dividing the 5 different areas that I want to present to you, the reader. The 5 areas are:

Paragraph 1: Why paragraphing is important for Task 2.

Paragraph 2: How to divide your paragraphing.

Paragraph 3: Where your paragraph divisions should occur.

Paragraph 4: The division of paragraphs in this section.

Paragraph 5: Explaining the comparison with this section and the one below to show how paragraphing can work.

Below I will repeat paragraphs 1 - 4 of this section on paragraphing but I am going to remove all the paragraphs and line breaks and make it a "sea of writing" as I said can happen above. I hope you feel that this section is easier to understand than the one below!! (By the way, I haven't used line breaks through this entire tutorial as there would be too many and it would be too confusing).

Paragraphing (**bad example section**)

This is a very easy thing to do but it can have an enormous effect on the clarity of your writing. I have said this for Task 1 but for Task 2 it's even more important. In Task 2 you will be writing more and it is therefore more important to divide your writing up into divisions to make it easier to read. Very often people use no paragraphing and the examiner is faced with a "sea" of writing with no breaks from start to finish. For me, the best writings are those where there are paragraphs separated by an empty line, similar to the text in this paper. In this way your ideas are separated clearly. It shows and gives organization to your writing and makes it more readable. For Task 2, have a paragraph break after your introduction, and then for every differing section of your separate ideas with the evidence. Then have a final paragraph for your conclusion. You should aim to have 3 or 4 paragraphs plus the introduction and conclusion. Look at this section on paragraphing. It is divided into 4 separate paragraphs dividing the 4 different areas that I want to present to you the reader. The 4 areas are: Paragraph 1: Why paragraphing is important for task 2: Paragraph 2: How to divide your paragraphing. Paragraph 3: Where your paragraph divisions should occur. Paragraph 4: An example to show you how paragraphing works.

I hope you feel that the first section was easier to understand than this second one!!

Ideas to Think About for the IELTS Academic Task 2 Writing

Timing

The exam paper recommends that you spend about 40 minutes on this question and this is about right. Remember that Task 2 gives more to your final writing band and so you should make sure that you have enough time after Task 1 to properly answer Task 2. Some students do Task 2 first in order to make sure that Task 2 is answered well before they get onto Task 1. There is no problem with this but make sure you write the 150 words to give a good answer for Task 1 as well.

So, whatever you decide to do about your approach to Task 1 and Task 2 in the writing paper, make sure that you spend approximately 20 minutes on Task 1 and 40 minutes on Task 2. This should give you the right amount of time to provide good answers to both tasks.

Answering the question.

Although this sounds very straightforward, people often fail to answer the question set and therefore don't get the band that they should even if the writing is very good.

First of all **read the question very carefully** (X2) in order to see exactly what it asks you. Very often there will be more than 1 part to the question; sometimes even 3 or 4 parts. When you produce your answer you must answer all the different parts of the question. How much you produce on each part depends on how important you think it is.

You have to write a formal academic English essay of the type that would be required for teachers or tertiary education courses. Formulate and develop an argument and show a personal response. Give your opinions and back them up with evidence and examples. Your answer should persuade, be consistent and develop logically towards a conclusion, which answers all parts of the question.

Another important basic is to write at least 250 words. Writing less does not answer the question, which tells you to write at least 250 words. If you write less than 250 words, the examiner marking your paper will give you a maximum of 5 for Arguments, Ideas and Evidence or even less. It is no problem to write more than the 250 words; there is no upward word limit on the essay. Time is your only constraint.

The question wants you to produce an essay. Therefore don't give a list of numbered notes (your paragraphs should not be numbered). Give the examiner a proper essay with an introduction, a main body with your ideas and evidence and a conclusion, all divided of course with the paragraphing techniques discussed above.

Planning

Many students that I have taught have regarded writing an essay plan as a waste of time. The only answer I can give is that it depends on the individual. If you are a good essay writer who can automatically organize your ideas and structure in your

head so well that you can produce a good structured essay without planning, then I say that's it's fine not to write an essay plan.

Also if you're really short of time and you need to get writing on page, then you don't want to waste time on planning. However, if none of these conditions apply, then 1 or 2 minutes thinking about your ideas and how you are going to present them will not be wasted. I'm not saying that you should spend 10 minutes on this. Just take a scrap of paper and jot down some ideas that you are going to use in your essay.

Then you can divide the ideas into 3 or 4 paragraphs in a logical order. This shouldn't take you long and the structure that this will give your essay will be well worth the time that you spend doing it.

The Introduction

First of all, **don't repeat any part of the question in your introduction**. This is not your own work and therefore will be disregarded by the examiner and deducted from the word count. You can use individual words but be careful of using "chunks" of the question text.

Your introduction should first say what you understand by the question. Then give the main issue or issues that you intend to bring into your answer. Don't go into any detail; you can save that for the later paragraphs.

Finally, the question often asks you to take up a position over an issue. There is no right answer for putting your views at the start and then explaining this through the essay, or developing your opinion through your essay and stating your final stance at the end. **I personally like the opinion at the start of the essay**. Quickly and clearly answer the question, making your attitude plain. Don't give any reasons. Again, that's what the body of your essay is for. You don't have to do it this way though. You can wait until your conclusion to give your position as regards the question.

The Body of Your Essay

You should aim to have 3 or 4 paragraphs in your answer. This is not exact. You can write more paragraphs, as your answer requires. Remember you've only got about 40 minutes to cover all the question areas so don't be too ambitious and try to write too much.

In the body of your essay you should do several things. You need to examine all parts of the question. Remember there is often more than 1 question contained in the essay question text. You need to look at all that is asked and look at both sides of every issue. IELTS essay questions usually ask you something which has two or more points of view, and you need to consider both sides of every argument no matter what your opinion is.

Look below at the example. The question asks whether or not you believe whether societies should use capital punishment. There are, of course, two points of view:

(1) Capital punishment should be used and

(2) Capital punishment shouldn't be used.

Let's say for example that you don't believe that capital punishment should be used by societies. **No matter what point of view you have, you should look at both sides**, though naturally your writing will favour the position that you have taken. Give the reasons why you don't believe in capital punishment but then look at the opposing view and say why you don't accept it. In this way you will show the reader your powers of analysis when looking at such an issue.

Don't forget that when you have finished looking at this issue there is a second part of the question to be analysed too.

As we said earlier, your ideas need to be supported by examples and it is in the body of your essay that they should appear. For every idea that you present try and give an example from your own experience that shows that your idea is right.

An example from your own experience means something that you know from your life, from your country's news or history or anything that you have read anywhere. You can actually invent examples if you need as long as they seem realistic and believable. The examiner is probably not going to research anything you write about.

All academic text needs to show some essential qualities. It needs to be concise, correct and complete. It also must display, interconnection (cohesion) between sentences and paragraphs, using academic words and phrases. The writing and flow should show that the most important (major or significant) point is made first and the other less important observations, link in and follow on.

The Conclusion

This doesn't need to be a long paragraph. You need to sum up your points providing a final perspective on your topic. All the conclusion needs is three or four strong sentences, which do not need to follow any set formula. Simply review the main points (**being careful not to restate them exactly or repeat all your examples**) and briefly describe your feelings about the topic; this provides an answer to all parts of the question. An anecdote can also end your essay in a useful way, but don't spend too much time if one does not come easy.

An Example of IELTS Task 2 Question and model writing

It's very difficult to visualize and understand all the things that I have said above. Here I will try and provide you with an example question and then go through the stages of thought to show you how to approach an IELTS Task 2 essay.

Here is a possible question that would be typical for a Task 2 essay question.

"Do you believe that societies ought to enforce capital punishment or Are there alternative forms of punishment that would be better used?"

First of all you need to consider the question. What does it ask? Straight away, you can see that it asks 2 things.

It wants to know if you believe that society should use capital punishment and it also wants to know if you can offer any alternatives to capital punishment. Your answer should give a balanced view of both parts of this question. What is important to appreciate is that there is no correct answer here. You can present any point of view as long as you can support it.

So, **in your planning stage** you should have a roadmap for the introduction, each paragraph and the conclusion. Here is my brief plan for the essay.

Intro

What cp is. Where it's used. (not my country). Differing opinions.

I don't believe in cp.

There are alternative punishments.

Body

Inhumane - we shouldn't sink to the level of criminals.

We can get convictions wrong; prisoners can be released if there's an error. Mentally ill. Examples.

Alternative punishments: life means life; hospitals for criminally insane. Costs more but society has a duty to care.

Many countries favour it and they say it works. Prisons too full. Killers deserve nothing less. Some crimes deserve it. Not my morals though.

Conclusion

I don't agree. We can do other things. Avoid mistakes and make modern society a humane one.

The above is a basic plan of how I want to write my essay. It's not rigid. I can change my ideas and format as I write if I feel I can do better.

I can also add things that I've forgotten as the essay goes on. It's normal of course for you to have new, good ideas as you write and the skill is to get them into your essay without upsetting the balance of the essay. How do you do this? It's practice again. You won't get good at writing essays and adapting your writing well without practice.

So, below is an example essay using the plan above as a basis.

Example Essay:

Capital punishment is the killing of a criminal for a crime that he has committed. Previously most countries employed this method of punishment but nowadays it is much less widely used. I personally do not believe that societies today should use capital punishment and I also believe that there are alternative punishments that can be used.

My main argument against capital punishment is that I believe we do not have the right to kill another human being regardless of the crime. I don't believe in the old religious maxim of "an eye for an eye." Modern societies shouldn't turn to such barbaric punishments.

Another argument against capital punishment is that people can be wrongly convicted and executed. If a man is in prison, he can be released if later proved not guilty. If he is dead, there is nothing that can be done. An example that illustrates my argument is, that in the UK, a group of supposed terrorists were convicted of murder in Birmingham in the 1970s. They were proved innocent about 15 years later and released. If they had been executed, innocent people would have died.

There are alternative punishments available. For serious crimes prison life sentences can be given with criminals imprisoned for the rest of their lives. Also a lot of horrific crimes are committed by people who are mentally sick. These people are not responsible for their actions and can be kept safely and permanently in secure hospitals. Yes, this costs a lot more but I believe it is the duty of society to do this.

On the other hand, there are arguments for capital punishment. Many people feel its threat stops serious crime and that criminals deserve nothing less. It's cheaper and keeps the prisons manageable. This point of view is understandable but the consequences of executing an innocent person are too significant to risk such an irreversible action.

So, in conclusion, I don't believe in capital punishment, as there are less barbaric alternatives available. We can avoid horrific mistakes and make modern society a more humane one.

Final Comment:

I hope that this essay shows how to approach the Task 2 question and illustrates the some of the ideas that written above. The above example was taken from a student's mock exam and was awarded a band 7. It could be improved on, so please aim to produce work of a higher quality.

Finally I will leave you with the message that I always do. To really improve your skills at writing essays, you need to practice. Get some essay titles, sit down when you get the chance, give yourself 40 minutes and write some essays. Try and do it as I have directed with a couple of minutes for planning, as this will train you to make a better-constructed essay in the long run.

You can get essay titles probably from surfing the internet, daily TV news or weekly papers like the Sunday Times.

Note to teacher: IELTS reading and writing tasks are demanding on ss and good teachers. You need to stay fresh in your own reading and understanding of current topics. If you are not feeling some pressure, then you are probably not working at your full potential. Above is just an appetizer; you will need to supply the main courses and dessert.

CHAPTER 4

LISTENING

IELTS ACADEMIC LISTENING TEST TUTORIAL

The IELTS Academic listening test is one area where teachers cannot help students as much as they can in other areas. The skill of listening is one that is developed by practice and there is not much a teacher can say to improve a student's ability at it. What we can do is to give you some hints for doing the test and also show you the type of question that you will come up against when you do the test. After that, as

much practice as possible is the way to improve. This practice can be doing actual IELTS practice listenings or by doing any form of listening in English.

The IELTS Academic listening test is approximately 40 minutes in length and there are four sections each with a separate listening passage. The listening test will be played just once and you must continually practice listening and responding, without getting stuck on an unanswered question.

In each section there are 10 questions making 40 in all. Sections 1 and 2 are based on social survival in an English speaking country and sections 3 and 4 are based on a more educational and training orientation. The actual tape lasts for about 30 minutes and **then you have 10 minutes at the end of the listening in order to transfer your answers to the answer paper. (Note: it is not the same with the reading test)**

Section 1 Here you will listen to a conversation between 2 people. The conversation is divided into 2 parts. You have to answer 10 questions based on what you hear. At the start of section 1 you will have an example read out to you and then explained. This is then repeated when the listening starts properly.

Section 2 Here you will hear a monologue though it may include a second speaker asking questions in order to stimulate the monologue. The monologue is divided into 2 parts. You have to answer 10 questions based on what you hear.

Section 3 Here you will listen to a conversation between 2, 3 or 4 people. The conversation is divided into 2 parts. You have to answer 10 questions based on what you hear.

Section 4 Here you will hear a monologue though it may include a second speaker asking questions in order to stimulate the monologue. The monologue is divided into 2 parts. You have to answer 10 questions based on what you hear.

The main problem that candidates have with the IELTS Academic listening test is that the listening tape is only played once. Therefore you have to be quite quick and very alert in order to pick up the answers, write them down and be ready for the next answer. Another area where students have problems is that they are used to listening to a live speaker in front of them when they can look at the lips and the body movements. IELTS candidates listen to a tape and this is not a natural skill. As I said above, you have to get as much practice at this skill as possible in order to maximise your chances of getting a good band.

Marking

There are 40 questions in the IELTS Academic Listening Test and 1 mark is awarded for each correct answer. There are no half marks. Your final mark out of 40

is then converted to a band from 1 - 9 using a converting table and this band is then averaged with the other 3 parts of the test to give your final IELTS band.

Band scores for the listening test and the final band are given as a whole band or a half band. The converting table used to change your mark out of 40 to the band out of 9 changes with every test. However, below you can see a rough guide that you can use to assess your practice. There is no guarantee that you will perform the same in the real test itself as the test converters vary with each test, but it can be a guide to your progress.

Listening Test Marks, Bands and Results - Rough Guide Converter

Score	Band
	1
1	2
2-3	3
4-9	4
10-16	5
17-24	6
25-31	7
32-36	8
37-38	9
39-40	

Listening Test Question Types

In the IELTS Academic listening test the same types of question come up every time so it will help you to know what these types are. They are as follows:
multiple choice

- short answer
- sentence completion
- notes/summary/diagram/flow chart/table completion
- labelling a diagram with numbered parts
- classification
- matching lists/phrases

These question types can all be found in IELTS practice tests including the ones in IELTS Practice Now question papers. As usual, practice is the key. Listening to tapes and doing the practice questions is the best possible preparation you can have.

Practice for the Listening Test

There are different types of practice that you can do to improve your listening skills for the IELTS exam. The best, as I've said before, is to practice on specific IELTS practice material. After that though there are other things. Listening to the radio is excellent as it is the same skill as the IELTS listening test - listening to a voice without the speaker(s) being present. Listening to the TV is good too but you can see the speaker. You could try turning your back to the TV as this will make it more realistic. Listening to the news on TV and radio is probably the best practice you could do with these two media. You can also see English speaking films at the cinema or at home on TV or video. All these things will develop your listening skills.

Listening Test Strategies

There isn't much you can do but there some things. First of all, you get time to read the questions at the start of each section and mid-way in each section. Use this time (usually 20 seconds) wisely. You should know in advance all the questions before you hear the tape. At the end of the sections you also get some time to check your answers. Use this time to check through your answers and then turn ahead to read the next questions in advance.

When you read the questions you can usually predict some of the types of answer that will come. For example, in section 1, if you can see that the test is asking for a telephone number, then you know you'll be listening out for numbers and the word telephone. In the later sections this becomes more complicated but the same technique can be used. Think about this when you are practising so you can develop this skill.

Tips and Ideas on the Listening Test

As in all IELTS tests, the questions get harder as it goes on. You will see from your practice that the types of listening and questions that you encounter in Section 1 are more difficult in Section 2 and so on. This does not mean that by Section 4 they are impossible but they are more demanding linguistically.

Beware of some questions which require a number (i.e.: a telephone number) or some letters (i.e.: a postcode) as sometimes what you think is the answer will be read out only for the speaker to correct him or herself and then say the correct answer.

An important tip is to answer all the questions as you hear them; don't wait until later. Sometimes people in these tests hear the correct answer but decide to remember the answer and write it down later so they can wait for the next answer. This I feel is a mistake. Firstly, people will very often forget this answer and secondly, if you follow

this method, you will have to remember up to 5 or 6 answers in a row before you can write them down. Then you'll forget even more.

As I said above, at the end of the test you have 10 minutes extra to transfer your answers from the question paper to the answer paper. Some people put their answers directly onto the answer paper. I feel it's better to write the answers on the question paper and use the 10 minutes given at the end for the transfer. Writing the answers on the question paper allows you to keep your concentration on the questions and, if you make a mistake, it's not so difficult to correct.

One area that students don't like is that, in the listening test, good grammar and spelling are important. The grammar part is not should not worry you too much, as you can't make many grammar errors in 3 words (the maximum you use in the listening test) but, if you spell something wrong, it will be marked as wrong. People think, quite rightly in my opinion, that the listening should test whether you understand what you heard and not how you spell something but these are the rules. So, be careful about your spelling!

If the question asks for no more than 3 words, use no more than 3 words. Writing 4 words is wrong. You won't be asked to do it in 3 words or less unless it is possible so don't worry; it can always be done.

Don't panic if you miss an answer. If it has really gone, then it is history. Worrying and panicking is only going to make you miss another one. One miss is probably not going to destroy your mark so calm down and listen for the next one. Sometimes you think you have missed it but you are mistaken. If you are calm and keep listening, maybe the answer will come or even be repeated.

Never leave a question unanswered; especially if it is only an A,B,C,D question or something similar. Guess if you really don't know. There are no marks taken away for wrong answers or even stupid answers. So, have a go! Logic, general knowledge or just luck might give you the right answer!

Anyway, work hard and good luck with the IELTS Academic Listening Test! I hope that this tutorial has helped you.

Further reflections and guides for IELTS Listening:

Key thoughts: The teacher must teach the *techniques* to enable to candidates to follow to tap their resources to achieve their highest potential possible in the 30-

minute listening test. The listening test will consist of four *graded* recorded sections comprising ten questions each. The time allocated to complete the exercise is around thirty minutes.

NB: Candidates will be given the opportunity to hear the recording only *once*. Specialised knowledge about a subject is not required but a general idea of topics will be helpful.

Overview: Suggested tutorial period to complete the module = six hours, divided into six one-hour sessions spread out over six different days / weeks. Depending on the candidate, time from this sector could be reallocated to other sectors as appropriate. In general, the listening module does not usually present too many difficulties.

Listening modules demand that a candidate is able to listen for specific information (link this to the scan reading technique); listening for the main ideas and information supporting those concepts; and an ability to understand (not necessarily, accept) the speaker's opinion.

Ensure that you have researched the techniques required for these lessons, thoroughly, as you must teach by modelling them.

Candidates must read each question *carefully*. For example, in a short answer question the answers may not be more than three words. It is imperative that candidates are drilled (as in rote drilling!) to read each question carefully. Tutors should reinforce this many times during each lesson.

Questions may be asking for the candidate to complete a sentence; multiple choice; link words in one column with those in an adjoining column; summary completion phrases.

There are times when a question may be asked in a slightly different form – this means that candidates must be able to not just listen for key words but also listen to test their ability to be able to make sense of what they hear.

If a speaker repeats the main idea or concepts this could be a subtle means of highlighting information required from an answer.

Group: as this is very much an individual task there is not much room for group activities, but sharing how the answers were arrived at can be helpful and a spur to weaker ss.

Comment: The listening uses individual student involvement to the maximum. Structure your lesson around student participation – monitored, of course!

Homework: Suggested homework assignments for candidates should comprise exercises to demonstrate an understanding of, and ability to, complete successful the concepts noted under *Overview*.

Self-Study: Encourage ss to listen to BBC Radio 4 news and record the main points for 20 minutes, 5 times a week. Then once a week, get them to share with the class

what they thought was the most important/interesting item they had heard. This will help them develop the required listening and response skills.

As an aside, remember that as the tutor you are perceived as the expert in the field. Ensure that you have researched thoroughly the relevant details before teaching the class and model by example your knowledge during each lesson.

Preparation process – the first and second one-hour each listening lessons:

1. Using yourself as a model, explain and demonstrate listening for specific information; listening for main ideas; and how to access the information supporting these ideas; understanding the speaker's opinion.
2. Using the lesson structure explain how to address the requirements for each answer.
3. Ask candidates to demonstrate their understanding of each concept by repeating the first 20-minute listening module as a pilot exercise. Reinforce the concepts at the beginning of each lesson.
4. Get each candidate to complete the second and third parts of the three-part listening exercise – timing strictly for 20 minutes.
5. Thereafter, within groups, mark the answers. Candidates must be enabled to identify their errors and, for homework do the corrections – self monitoring.

Total time = 120 minutes.

Preparation process – the third and fourth one-hour each listening sessions:

1. Remind candidates that listening modules demand that a candidate must be able to demonstrate listening for specific information; listening for main ideas; and how to access the information supporting these ideas; understanding the speaker's opinion.
2. importantly, each question must be read *carefully*, and answered *only* as required by the question.
3. Get each candidate to complete the three lessons within / around the 20-minute time limitations for each. Explain that they should listen carefully as they only have one shot at listening! No repeats are possible.
4. Thereafter, complete the remaining sections and mark using group involvement and participation. Candidates must be able to identify their errors and, for homework do the corrections – self monitoring.

Preparation process – the fifth and sixth one-hour each listening sessions:

1. Remind candidates that listening modules demand that a candidate must be able to demonstrate listening for specific information; listening for main ideas; and how to access the information supporting these ideas; understanding the speaker's opinion *and*
2. importantly, each question must be read *carefully*, and answered *only* as required by the question.
3. Get each candidate to complete the three lessons within / around the 20-minute time limitations for each. Explain that they should listen carefully as they only have one shot at listening! No repeats are possible.
4. Thereafter, complete the remaining sections and mark using group involvement and participation. Candidates must be able to identify their errors and, for homework do the corrections – self monitoring.

CHAPTER 5

SPEAKING

IELTS ACADEMIC SPEAKING TEST TUTORIAL (for Teachers & ss)

The IELTS Academic Speaking test is the shortest of the components of the IELTS test - only 11 to 14 minutes. In this short time you have to convince the examiner who will be speaking with you of your level of English.

The IELTS Academic Speaking Test is the same for both the Academic and General Training modules. On the day of the test, it is conducted with 1 examiner and 1 candidate. The Speaking test is recorded and is divided into 3 sections:

Section 1 begins with some general introductory questions. This is followed by some questions on personal information similar to the type of questions one would ask

when meeting someone for the first time. Finally the examiner asks a series of questions of 2 topics of general interest. (4 - 5 minutes)

Section 2 is a monologue (1 person speaking) by the candidate. The examiner will give the candidate a card with a subject and a few guiding questions on it. The student must talk for 1 to 2 minutes on this subject. The examiner decides on the exact length. The student has an optional 1 minute in order to prepare for his talk and is provided with some paper and a pencil in order to make some brief notes. After the candidate's talk the examiner will ask 1 or 2 brief questions in order to finish off the section. (3 - 4 minutes)

In section 3 the examiner will ask some more questions generally related to the subject spoken about in section 2. These questions will be more demanding and require some critical analysis on the part of the candidate. (4 - 5 minutes)

Question Types

The types of questions that come in the IELTS Academic Speaking Test are very general in nature and are designed so that anyone around the world, regardless of what background or culture they come from, should be able to answer them. The questions will not be overly personal and will avoid contentious subjects such as politics, sex or religion.

All the questions will be open questions rather than closed questions. An open question asks the candidate to give an extended answer, and so have the opportunity to show how good his English is. A closed question is one that can be answered by a single word or a couple of words. So, you will not get a question like:

Do you like living in your town?

A student could just answer yes. Any answers like this will just be followed by the question why? So you have to extend your answer (what you should have done after the "yes" anyway). Anyway, the question is more likely to be:

Why do you like living in your town?

Here the candidate has to give an explanation and therefore the examiner hears plenty of English which will help him or her evaluate you.

Marking - IELTS Academic Speaking Test Marks, Bands and Results

In the IELTS Academic Speaking Test you will be marked in 4 areas. These 4 areas are: Fluency and Coherence, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy and Pronunciation. For the first 3, you get a mark out of 9. For Pronunciation you get a 2, 4, 6 or 8. Finally an average is taken to give you your final band for the Speaking. Let's look at these areas in more detail.

Fluency and Coherence: The examiner grades your fluency, which is how easy, smooth and flowing your speaking is. To get a good grade here, any gaps in your speaking should be associated with searching for the right idea rather than hesitancy

with finding the right word or structure. For the coherence part, the examiner looks at how easy you are to understand. Does your flow of ideas run smoothly, logically and with consistency? Do you communicate well?

Lexical Resource: This mark grades the range of words that you use in your speaking test and whether you use the words in the right way, at the right time and in the right place.

Grammatical Range and Resource: This mark grades your range of grammatical structures, your accuracy at producing them and whether you use the right structure at the right time and in the right place. This is the area that worries the candidates the most as it is the dreaded grammar. Remember it is only 1 part out of 4.

Pronunciation: This mark grades you on how clearly you speak English.

The Three Sections of the IELTS Academic Listening Test

Here we will look at the three sections in more detail. Remember, the IELTS test always tries to mirror situations that you will encounter as a student or immigrant in an English speaking country. The speaking test is no different and each of the sections has a specific purpose. Like all the different modules of the IELTS, the speaking gets more difficult as it goes on. The questions that are asked in Section 1 are easier than in Section 2 and so on. This does not mean that by Section 3 they are impossible but they are more demanding linguistically.

Section 1 (4 - 5 minutes)

This section is divided into three parts.

- i) The first part involves general introductions. Here the examiner checks that he or she has the right person by checking the candidates name, origin and identification. This only takes a few seconds.
- ii) In the second part the examiner asks some personal (not too personal so don't worry) questions about some familiar topics such as yourself, your family, your home or your work/study. These questions are the type that people would use when meeting someone for the first time. This should last for a couple of minutes.
- iii) In the third part the examiner chooses 2 sets of questions from his selection. These sets of questions will cover general ideas on a theme of general interest.

Section 2 (3 - 4 minutes)

In this section the candidate has to give a small "speech" or monologue on a general subject chosen by the examiner. The examiner will hand you a card with the subject written on it, along with about three questions on the subject in order to guide and help your speaking. The examiner will then tell you that you have 1 minute to prepare your mini-talk and he or she will give you some paper and a pencil to make some notes during that minute. You can refer to your notes while you are speaking. After the minute, the examiner will ask you to start talking and you must talk on the subject until the examiner asks you to stop. After he has asked you to stop, he may ask you 1 or 2 general questions about what you have been discussing. You cannot ask the examiner for another card. You must use the one that he gives you.

Section 3 (4 - 5 minutes)

In Section 3 the examiner will ask you a series of questions thematically linked to the subject that you spoke about in Section 2. These questions will be of a more demanding nature and will require a more analytical and thoughtful answer. You will also probably need to use more complex language as regards grammatical structure and vocabulary.

How to do well in the IELTS Academic Speaking Test

There are a number of things you can do to have a better performance in the IELTS Academic Speaking Test.

First of all practice. This is the key to all the different modules of IELTS. Below you will find a separate section devoted to practising the speaking.

When you are in the test, smile and look the examiner in the eye. Try and be friendly and look as though you are enjoying the conversation. This has a big effect on the examiner. If an examiner has to talk with someone who doesn't talk much, doesn't smile at all and who clearly doesn't want to be there, then it has a negative effect on the examiner. Being nervous is fine. The examiner understands that and will try and put you at ease. But be friendly. It makes a difference.

Don't worry about the occasional mistake. The examiner will expect some mistakes - after all, English is a foreign language for you and people make mistakes in speaking foreign languages. The examiner is not making a note of every single mistake that you make. This would be impossible to do and concentrate on your speaking. He will more get a general impression of your English accuracy so individual errors don't matter. More important is your communication.

You have to talk. Without your talking input, the examiner can't grade you very well. Try and give as full an answer as you can so that you show the examiner that you are comfortable at talking at length and can communicate well. Don't do this to extremes though. When you have finished what you have to say stop. Don't try and force more out as it will probably be strained and repetitive. The examiner will see that you have finished and will give you the next question. Similarly, you won't be able to answer all questions at length. Different people can talk about different questions more and the examiner knows this. If you don't know much about something, say so and then say what you do know. When you're finished, the examiner will give you another question. You can't duck out of every question though - the responsibility is on you to talk.

Don't try and be too clever. Just try and talk normally as that is when you will perform at your best. If you try and extend yourself too much, then that is when you will make the most errors.

Perfection is not needed. You can still make some errors and get a 9 (not many errors though). So don't let making errors upset you. Get on with the talking and concentrate on your communication.

One thing that puts candidates off is that the speaking test is recorded. This is done so that, if necessary, the speaking can be re-marked. If the bands for a candidate's writing and speaking for instance are very different, then the candidate's test is re-checked. If the speaking was not recorded, then this could not be done. This doesn't happen very often. Sample recordings are also sent to the IELTS administration to be monitored to make sure that examiners are doing a good job and assigning the correct bands. So, try and forget that the recorder is there and get on with answering the questions.

Don't forget your ID! You need it at the start of the test.

Don't give yes/no answers unless you continue with a because.... It gives a bad impression. If you do give a yes/no answer, you'll probably get a why next anyway.

Practice

As in all parts of the IELTS, this is the one thing that will really improve your band. There are various things that you can do to improve your performance.

Prepare the types of questions for each of the different sections.

Section 1

In section 1 you start with personal questions such as about yourself, your family, your home or your work/study. So, sit down with your dictionary and try and think of all the vocabulary you would need to completely describe all parts of your life, home, family and work/study. Then sit down with a piece of paper and write down every question you can think of about these ideas. Try and come up with about 20. You can then practice them in 2 ways:

i) Get a friend to ask you the questions and practice giving long, full answers. Do this again and again. It doesn't matter if you do the same question frequently, as you will give better and better answers with more and more information. The more often you practice this, the better you'll get.

ii) If you don't have a friend who can do this, then you can do it by yourself. You just look at your list and imagine that someone has asked you the question. Then, off you go. You can do this sat at home, you can talk to the cat, the mirror or do it driving on the way to work. It may feel a bit strange at first, talking by yourself, but it works and you will improve. You don't have to do either method i or ii, you can mix both. It all helps.

In the second part of Section 1 you have to answer questions on themes of general interest. These are not complicated but are more demanding than the ones that you did in the part before. Let's say for example that the theme the examiner chooses is travelling. The examiner will have a set of questions to ask you. How many he asks depends on how long you talk for in your answers. The first question could be:

Do you enjoy traveling and why/why not?

Then this could be followed by:

Where would you like to travel to and why?

You can find other sample themes and questions in IELTS Practice Now Question Papers and from other sources. Once you have an idea of the types of theme and question, you can start to make your own examples and practice answering them in the ways (i and ii) above. I have done this with classes and it works very well. Students doing this, more often than not, come up with actual themes and questions from the test itself!!

Section 2

Preparation and practice for Section 2 is similar to the practice in Section 1. You have to talk for 1 to 2 minutes in English. Speaking for this time in your own language is quite hard, so in a foreign language it is harder. The reason it is hard is that you don't often talk uninterrupted for 1 to 2 minutes about anything, whether it is in your language or English. So, how do you get better at it? By practising it again and again. Let's say that your task is as follows:

Describe a favourite holiday destination that you like.

You should say:

When you first went there.

How you get there.

What you do when you're there.

And explain why this place is so special for you.

So, you can see the format of this section. The practice procedure is as before. Check out other question types and soon you'll be able to develop your own. Then practice them with someone or by yourself. Soon, talking for 2 minutes without stopping won't be a problem. Remember you don't have to talk fast or without breaks. They want you to talk normally. Talk at a normal speed, pause to take breaths and take time to consult your notes to give yourself ideas about what to talk about next.

The follow up question to end Section 2 is not so important that it needs to be practiced as it only requires a few words as an answer. An example question from the examiner for the subject above could be:

"Do you think I would enjoy a holiday in this place too?"

The candidate would just be expected to say something like:

"Oh yes, I think so."

Or:

"Maybe not, it might be too hot for you."

You can see that nothing very long is required.

At this point I'd like to explain about the 1 minute preparation time and the notes that you can write during it. First of all, use your preparation time and make notes. Before you begin your monologue, you will have 1 minute to prepare for it. Some people think that they don't need the time at all and will start straight away. Very often these people will dry up early and be at a loss about how to continue. Use your time. Someone starting straight away does not get any advantage at all over someone who takes the full minute to prepare.

So, what should you write in your notes? First of all, don't try and write out your whole talk word for word. You don't have enough time. Looking at the question above (which is a typical layout for this section) you can see that there is a main question (Describe a favourite holiday destination that you like.) and then 3 mini-questions following (Say when you first went there, how you get there what you do when you're there and explain why this place is so special for you).

These questions are here to help you as they give your ideas to talk about and give your talk a bit of structure. However, it asks you to talk about these things so you should talk about them. In your notes quickly jot down one or two ideas for each of the questions, so that they will remind you about things to talk about when you look at your notes during your talk. Finally, if you have time, maybe make a note of something from your own experience connected to the talking theme. When you are talking about something from your own experience, it is easier to talk at length. For example, for the question above, you could be just finishing and still have 45 seconds left to talk. You could be saying why the place is so special to you. As you run out of ideas you could give an example out of your own experience. You could say:

"Actually why I like the place so much is shown from something that happened to me the last time I was there. I was in a restaurant having some food and..."

The subject of your story doesn't matter as you are still on the subject of your talk. The main thing is that it's keeping you talking.

Section 3

Section 3 really carries on from where Section 2 left off. The examiner will ask you questions that are thematically linked to the subject that you talked about in Section 2. For example, for the question we looked at above about a holiday destination, the examiner might choose to ask you questions about tourism and the airline industry. The examiner will have a set of questions to ask you. How many he asks depends on how long you talk for in your answers. None of the questions will be of a technical nature or require any specialist knowledge as that would be unfair, but you will be expected to give your opinion on what is asked you.

So, let's look at some examples.

Tourism

Can you predict any major changes that could happen in the Tourist Industry over the next 50 years?

Can you compare the tourist industry in your country today with the tourist industry when your grandparents were young? Can you identify some of the factors that have led to the success of the airline industry?

Airline

Can you suggest any ways in which air travel could be made safer?

You can see that the questions here are more analytical and require more thought than the questions in the previous sections.

As regards practice, the procedure is as in the previous sections. You need to get someone to do the questions with you, or do them alone and then develop your own questions and practice with them.

Further points to consider:

Key thoughts: The teacher must teach the techniques to enable to candidate to follow to tap their resources to achieve their highest potential possible in the around 15-minutes speaking test. The speaking test will consist of three parts comprising one-to-one communication with the examiner.

The tutor must enable the student to develop confidence and smarten-up on their speaking abilities.

Overview: Suggested tutorial period to complete the module = three hours, divided into six 30-minute sessions spread out over six different days / weeks. Depending on the candidate, time remaining from this sector could be reallocated to other sectors as appropriate. In general, the speaking module does not usually present too many difficulties.

Speaking modules demand that a candidate is able to articulate words clearly, with understandable pronunciation. Vocabulary and diction are important.

Candidates must address the topics on hand and not waffle.

A relaxed and polite attitude with positive body language (look at the examiner, smile, do not chew gum (!) and ask questions if clarity is needed.

One-to-One: The tutor plays a higher profile lead in this module and the preparation must be done on an individual basis, within the group (observational learning).

Format in brief: Module One (around 4 – 5 minutes). The examiner will ask the candidate questions based on everyday / common topics including personal experience.

NB: The candidate must give full answers to each question and not stray from the subject. The examiner will be looking at the ability of the candidate to give understandable personal information; talk about familiar issues, habits and regular incidents in an interesting and engaging manner; the ability of the candidate to express coherently their opinions using the appropriate vocabulary.

Module Two (around 3 - 4 minutes). The examiner will hand the student a slip of paper on which a topic is written. The candidate has one minute to prepare their talk and will then have to respond, without stopping, for two minutes.

NB: The candidate must stick to the topic; use appropriate grammar; body language; intonation; and relevant vocabulary. The examiner will be assessing whether the candidate can continue with a conversation without being jogged / aided / supported.

Importantly, the ability of the candidate to manage their use of language, organise ideas logically and express appropriately their feelings will be noted.

Module Three (around 4 -5 minutes). The examiner will expand on the topic raised in module two. The candidate has to answer questions and discuss broadly issues emanating from the topic. Language appropriate to the subject and situation must be used. In this final section, the examiner will looking to see whether the candidate is able to give expression and coherence to justify their views and opinions (as opposed to rote responses); offer rational explanations for their opinions and display a clear understanding of the conversational rules of English.

Preparation process – the first and second 30-minute each speaking lessons:

Role play yourself as the instructor and prepare the candidate for the interview in basic instructions on body posture; body language with eye contact emphasis; confidence in speaking; techniques to break the ice and how to relax. Pavlovian conditioning is a good method to follow!

Using module one – take the student through the loop.

Using module two – take the student through the loop.

Using module three – take the student through the loop.

Thereafter, get feedback from the group – how could they have responded differently; what they liked; disliked; what they learned.

Preparation process – the third and fourth 30-minute each listening sessions:

As for the first and second lessons but highlighting the accepted improvements / changes so that learning is reinforced.

Thereafter, get feedback from the group – how they could have responded differently, what they liked; disliked; what they learned.

Preparation process – the fifth and sixth 30-minute each listening sessions:

As for the third and fourth lessons but highlighting the accepted improvements / changes so that learning is reinforced.

Thereafter, get feedback from the group – how they could have responded differently, what they liked; disliked; what they learned.

In the main, the tutor plays an enabling and facilitating role giving teacher to student input as appropriate. Except for the one-to-one tutoring concept, the involvement of other candidates in the learning process is vital. Learning through involvement, participation and observation and processed through the route of experiential acquisition is vital.

TASKS

A. Write an assignment of around 500 words wherein you explain the IELTS testing system to a student. Some of these facts are not available in your notes – you will need to access this knowledge from the research material suggested in the course. Your assignment should deal with the following factors:

1. What do the letters IELTS stand for?
2. Where do students formally sit the IELTS examination?
3. What level of English is required to candidate for the IELTS test?
4. In the listening test, the student listens to a cassette. How many times can the cassette be listened to?
5. When doing the writing test, how many pieces of writing have to be completed?
6. Explain what kind of texts will be read in the academic reading paper and what is the content material of each section?
7. What is the limit for words required for the writing test?
8. How many people are present when the speaking test takes place?
9. Where do I write the answers to some of the tests?
10. What length of time is allowed to prepare for the speaking test?
11. How important is spelling?

(with acknowledgement to Macmillan Publishers Ltd 2004 – edited)

B. Write an assignment of around 500 words explaining how you would prepare an IELTS candidate for the exam. Outline the *process* you would follow and identify some of the possible problems you might encounter and address cultural challenges with regard to the method of teaching using the teacher-student approach.

C. Give reasons for your viewpoint about the place of grammar and vocabulary in IELTS preparation. Your assignment should be around 350 words in length.

D. Create a lesson plan for all the IELTS tasks (reading, writing [both 1 & 2], listening and speaking)

E. Write up a complete (150 & 250 words) sample of task 1 and task 2 writing.

F. Create your own introduction to IELTS for an overseas student, who holds a BA degree for their own country. Assume a band level of 5 has already been achieved. Set out the main areas the ss will need to focus on to raise their score to band 7.

1. Explain the difference between general English and academic.
2. Suggest a self-study programme.
3. Explain why just working hard in class is seldom sufficient for students who need to score band 7.
4. Create a handout giving example of linking words and phrases. Also explain where and why these connectives need to be used.
5. Explain the method of describing an illustration.
6. Find a flow chart task 1 example from IELTSexam.com and write an explanation of how the student should approach this task.

I hope you will enjoy teaching IELTS as much as I have. Later you will understand how very important your teaching and caring for you students is. You really are like a king maker, because if you can impart the required knowledge, skills and confidence, you will open doors that can take these young people from hope to success.

Enjoy!

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

None IELTS sample of flow charts, line graphs, bar charts and pie charts.

Good to use for expending vocabulary and descriptive phrases.

The US sub-prime crisis in graphics

The US sub-prime mortgage crisis has led to plunging property prices, a slowdown in the US economy, and billions in losses by banks. It stems from a fundamental change in the way mortgages are funded.

THE NEW MODEL OF MORTGAGE LENDING



How it went wrong



GLOBAL CREDIT CRUNCH
Sub-prime woes spread worldwide

LATEST NEWS

Fed cuts growth forecast
Record defaults hit Freddie Mac
Swiss Re hit by sub-prime losses
Credit losses 'may reach \$400bn'
US backs lending clampdown
Bank warns of sharp slowdown
HSBC \$3.4bn sub-prime hit
Barclays reveals sub-prime losses

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Stemming panics

What lessons we can learn from financial crises in the past

Q&A: What's troubling markets?

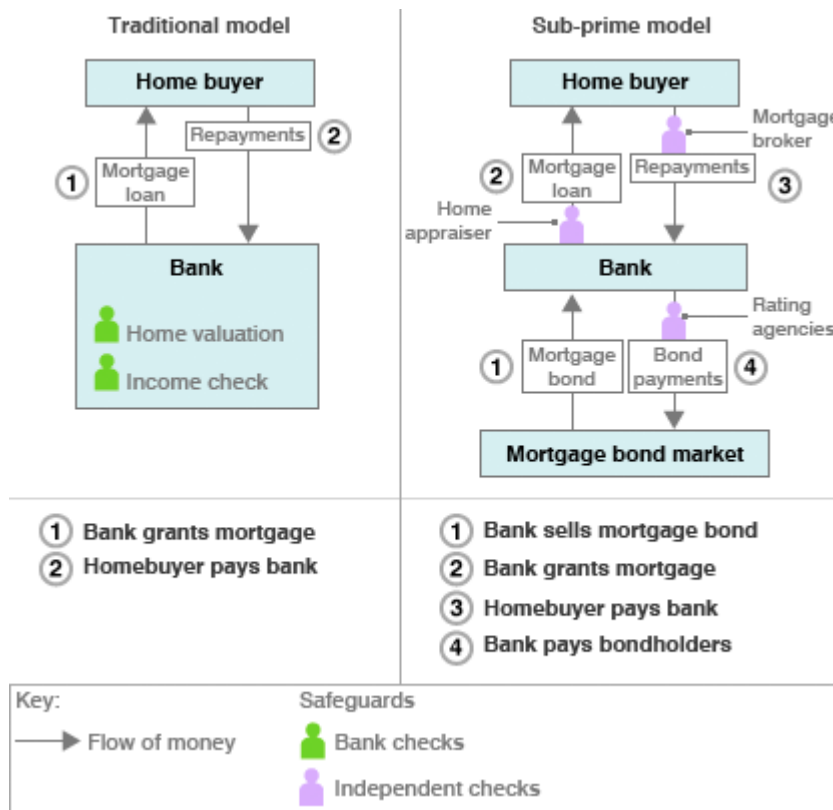
Timeline: Sub-prime losses

A beginner's guide to the crisis

US SUB-PRIME PROBLEMS

In Graphics

See how the sub-prime problem evolved to threaten the financial system



Politicians search for solutions
 Carnage on Wall Street
 Foreclosure wave sweeps US
 US housing market crash
 Credit woes 'need private action'

Traditionally, banks have financed their mortgage lending through the deposits they receive from their customers. This has limited the amount of mortgage lending they could do.

In recent years, banks have moved to a new model where they sell on the mortgages to the bond markets. This has made it much easier to fund additional borrowing,

But it has also led to abuses as banks no longer have the incentive to check carefully the mortgages they issue.

THE RISE OF THE MORTGAGE BOND MARKET

In the past five years, the private sector has dramatically expanded its role in the mortgage bond market, which had previously been dominated by government-sponsored agencies like Freddie Mac.

They specialised in new types of mortgages, such as sub-prime lending to borrowers with poor credit histories and weak documentation of income, who were shunned by the "prime" lenders like Freddie Mac.

RISE OF MORTGAGE BOND MARKET
 Outstanding mortgage-backed securities (\$ billion)

Year	Government backed (\$ billion)	Private sector (\$ billion)	Total (\$ billion)
1996	1500	1000	2500
1997	1800	1200	3000
1998	2000	1500	3500
1999	2200	1800	4000
2000	2500	2200	4700
2001	2800	2500	5300
2002	3200	2800	6000
2003	3500	3200	6700
2004	3800	3500	7300
2005	4000	3800	7800
2006	4200	4000	8200
2007*	4500	4500	9000

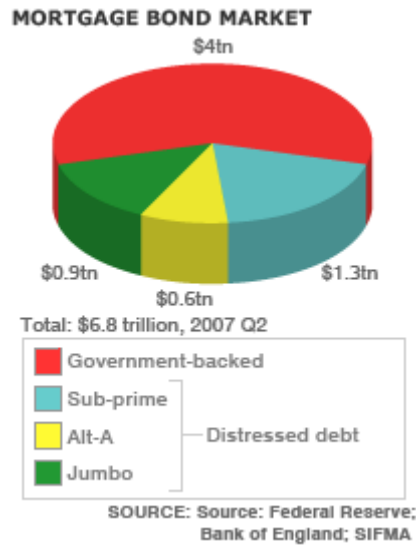
*Q2

SOURCE: SIFMA

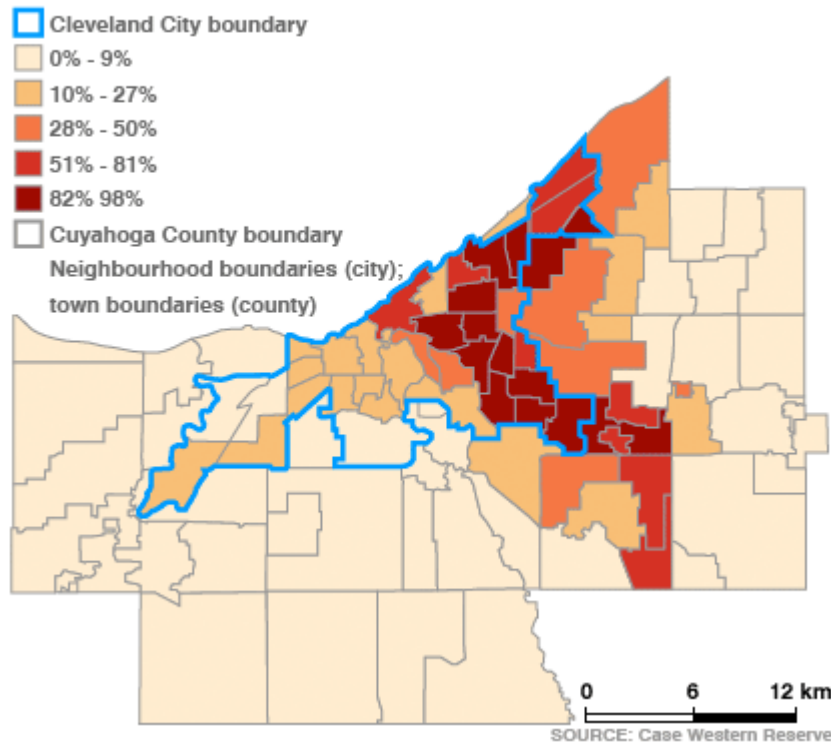
They also included "jumbo" mortgages for properties over Freddie Mac's \$417,000 (£202,000) mortgage limit.

The business proved extremely profitable for the banks, which earned a fee for each mortgage they sold on. They urged mortgage brokers to sell more and more of these mortgages.

Now the mortgage bond market is worth \$6 trillion, and is the largest single part of the whole \$27 trillion US bond market, bigger even than Treasury bonds.

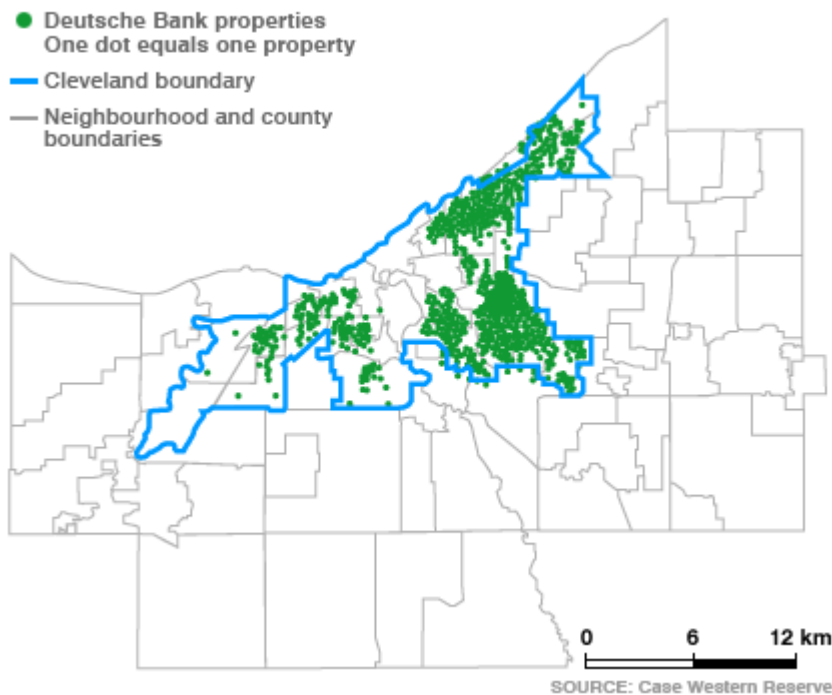


BLACK-MAJORITY AREAS IN CLEVELAND METRO AREA
 % Afro-American population by town and neighbourhood



FORECLOSURES BY DEUTSCHE BANK TRUST IN CLEVELAND METRO AREA

Properties foreclosed by Deutsche Bank Trust on behalf of sub-prime bondholders



For many years, Cleveland was the sub-prime capital of America.

It was a poor, working class city, hit hard by the decline of manufacturing and sharply divided along racial lines.

Mortgage brokers focused their efforts by selling sub-prime mortgages in working class black areas where many people had achieved home ownership.

They told them that they could get cash by refinancing their homes, but often neglected to properly explain that the new sub-prime mortgages would "reset" after 2 years at double the interest rate.

The result was a wave of repossessions that blighted neighbourhoods across the city and the inner suburbs.

By late 2007, one in ten homes in Cleveland had been repossessed and Deutsche Bank Trust, acting on behalf of bondholders, was the largest property owner in the city.

THE CRISIS GOES NATIONWIDE

Sub-prime lending had spread from inner-city areas right across America by 2005.

By then, one in five mortgages were sub-prime, and they were particularly popular among recent immigrants trying to buy a home for the first time in the "hot" housing markets of Southern California, Arizona, Nevada, and the suburbs of Washington, DC and New York City.

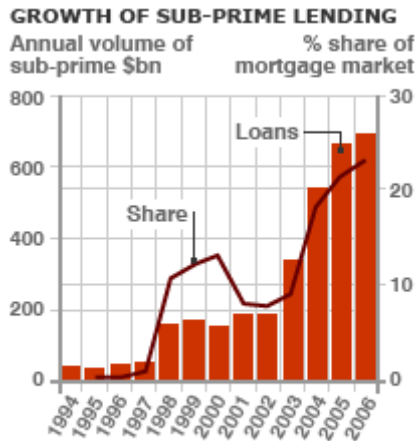
House prices were high, and it was difficult to become an owner-occupier without moving to the very edge of the metropolitan area.

But these mortgages had a much higher rate of repossession than conventional mortgages because they were "balloon" mortgages.

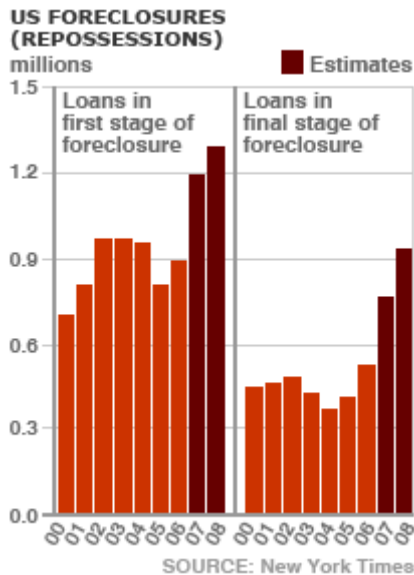
The payments were fixed for two years, and then became variable and much higher.

Consequently, a wave of repossessions is likely to sweep America as many of these mortgages reset to higher rates in the next two years.

And it is likely that as many as two million families will be evicted from their homes as their cases make their way through the courts.



SOURCE: Center for Responsible Lending /Inside Mortgage Finance



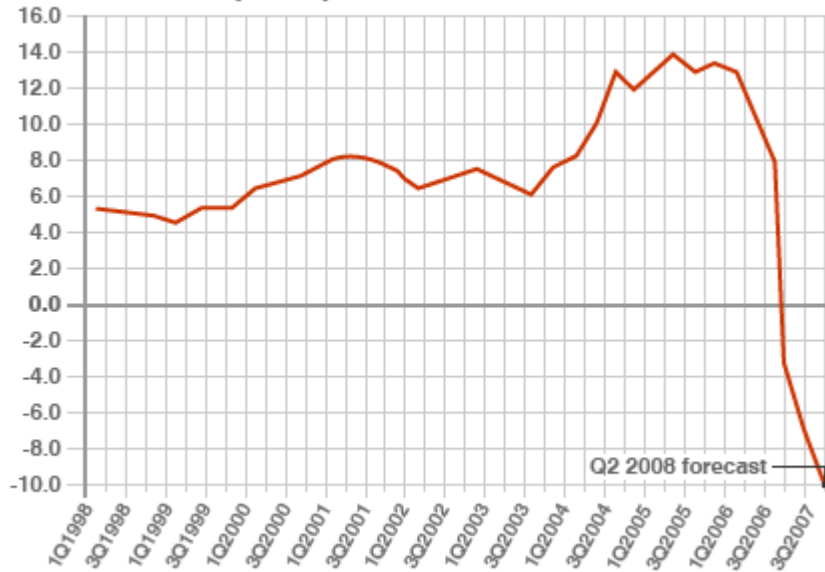
SOURCE: New York Times

The Bush administration is pushing the industry to renegotiate rather than repossess where possible, but mortgage companies are being overwhelmed by a tidal wave of cases.

THE HOUSING PRICE CRASH

US HOUSE PRICE TRENDS

% increase/decrease year-on-year



SOURCE: Center for Responsible Lending/OFHEO/NAR

The wave of repossessions is having a dramatic effect on house prices, reversing the housing boom of the last few years and causing the first national decline in house prices since the 1930s.

There is a glut of four million unsold homes that is depressing prices, as builders have also been forced to lower prices to get rid of unsold properties.

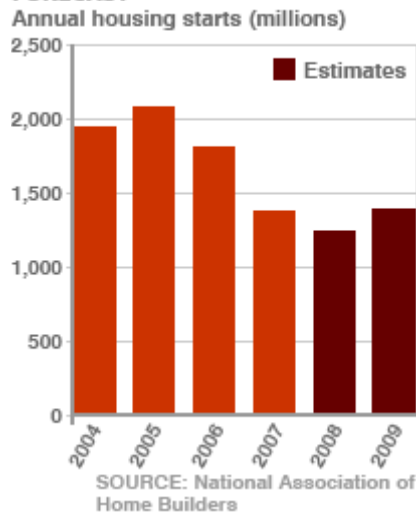
And house prices, which are currently declining at an annual rate of 4.5%, are expected to fall by at least 10% by next year - and more in areas like California and Florida which had the biggest boom.

The property crash is also affecting the broader economy, with the building industry expected to cut its output by half, with the loss of between one and two million jobs.

Many smaller builders will go out of business, and the larger firms are all suffering huge losses.

The building industry makes up 15% of the US economy, but a slowdown in the property market also hits many other industries, for instance makers of durable goods, such as washing machines, and DIY stores, such as Home Depot.

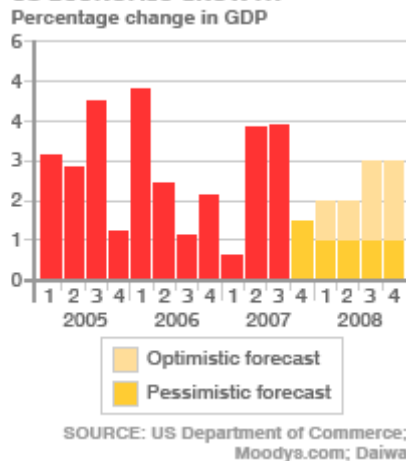
US HOUSING CONSTRUCTION FORECAST



Economists expect the US economy to slow in the last three months of 2007 to an annual rate of 1% to 1.5%, compared with growth of 3.9% now.

But no one is sure how long the slowdown will last. Many US consumers have spent beyond their current income by borrowing on credit, and the fall in the value of their homes may make them reluctant to continue this pattern in the future.

US ECONOMIC GROWTH



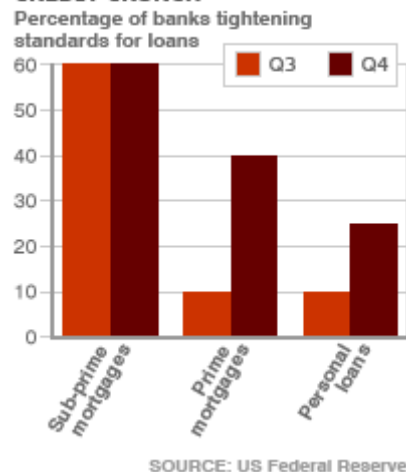
CREDIT CRUNCH

One reason the economic slowdown could get worse is that banks and other lenders are cutting back on how much credit they will make available.

They are rejecting more people who apply for credit cards, insisting on bigger deposits for house purchase, and looking more closely at applications for personal loans.

The mortgage market has been particularly badly affected, with individuals finding it very difficult to get non-traditional mortgages, both sub-prime and "jumbo" (over the limit guaranteed by government-sponsored agencies).

CREDIT CRUNCH



The banks have been forced to do this by the drying up of the wholesale bond markets and by the effect of the crisis on their own balance sheets.

BANK LOSSES

The banking industry is facing huge losses as a result of the sub-prime crisis.

Already banks have announced \$60bn worth of losses as many of the mortgage bonds backed by sub-prime mortgages have fallen in value.

The losses could be much greater, as many banks have concealed their holdings of sub-prime mortgages in exotic, off-balance sheet instruments such as "structured investment vehicles" or SIVs.

Although the banks say they do not own these SIVs, and therefore are not liable for their losses, they may be forced to cover any bad debts that they accrue.

HIDDEN BANK LOSSES

Banks' sponsorship of commercial paper linked to sub-prime investment vehicles



BOND MARKET COLLAPSE

Also suffering huge losses are the bondholders, such as pension funds, who bought sub-prime mortgage bonds.

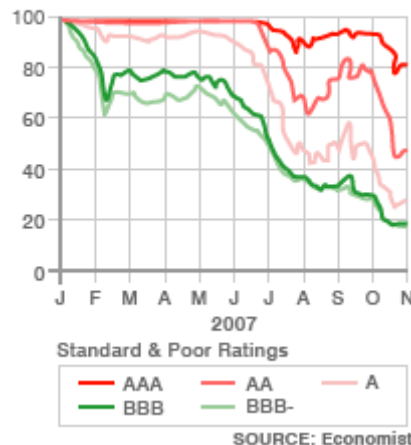
These have fallen sharply in value in the last few months, and are now worth between 20% and 40% of their original value for most asset classes, even those considered safe by the ratings agencies.

If the banks are forced to reveal their losses based on current prices, they will be even bigger.

It is estimated that ultimately losses suffered by financial institutions could be between \$220bn and \$450bn, as the \$1 trillion in sub-prime mortgage bonds is revalued.

CURRENT INDEX VALUE OF MORTGAGE BONDS, 2007=100

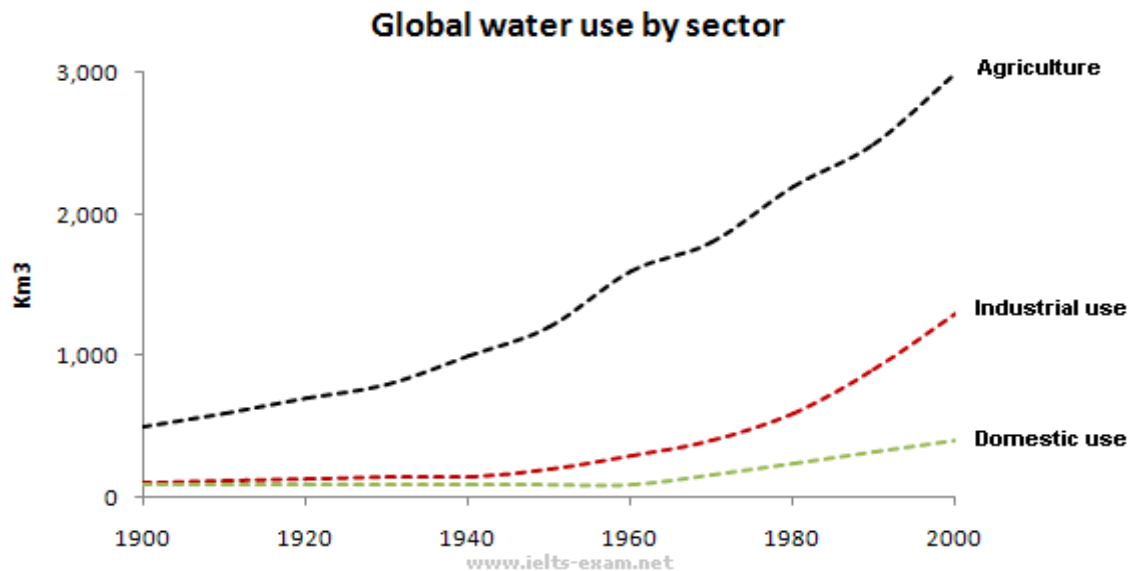
Implied value of mortgage-backed bonds issued in Jan 2007



The graph and table below give information about water use worldwide and water consumption in two different countries.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



Brazil	176 million	26,500 km ²	359 m ³
Democratic Republic of Congo	5.2 million	100 km ²	8 m ³

Depicted are two diagrams; first, a line graph showing how the amount of water used worldwide changed between 1900 and 2000 and secondly a table recording the contrasting levels of water consumption in two different nations. The trend reveals a significant increase of water in all categories.

The line graph reveals how throughout the 20th century, the largest quantity of water was used for agricultural purposes, and this increased steadily and then strongly from about 500 km³ when first recorded to around 3,000 km³ in the year 2000. Water used in the industrial and domestic sectors also increased, but consumption was minimal until mid-century. From 1950 onwards, industrial use continually increased to just over 1,000 km³, while domestic use rose more slowly to only 300 km³, both far below the levels of agricultural consumption.

The table illustrates the differences in agriculture consumption in some areas of the world by contrasting the amount of irrigated land in Brazil (26,500 km²) with the much smaller D.R.C. (100 km²). This means that a huge amount of water is used in

agriculture in Brazil, and this seeming excess, is also reflected in the figures for water consumption per person: 359 m³ compared with only 8 m³ in the Congo. With a population of 176 million, the figures for Brazil indicate how high agriculture water consumption can be in some countries.

Comparisons may be drawn between the growth of industrialization and the significant demand for non-domestic water use during the 20th century and shows how water needs to be valued and conserved through the world.

First read and understand the question and the task.

Plan your writing:

- there are two charts to introduce:
 - line graph and table
 - mention the axis:
 - measured in thousand km³; during the 20th century
 - mention the trends
- the largest and main points first:
 - agriculture
- next:
 - industry and domestic
- Table:
 - make comments on the contrast in levels per nation and person.
- Summary:
 - need to conserve

2)

Two examples of authentic papers.

Teachers can observe the differences and decide how they would correct and then help the ss to improve.

Recycling is now an essential measure: it is time for everyone in society to become more responsible towards the environment.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least 250 words.

model answer: 1

I think it is true that in almost every country today each household and family produces a large amount of waste every week. Most of this rubbish comes from the packaging from the things we buy, such as processed food. But even if we buy fresh food without packaging, we still produce rubbish from the plastic bags used everywhere to carry shopping home.

The reason why we have so much packaging is that we consume so much more on a daily basis than families did in the past. Convenience is also very important in modern life, so we buy packaging or canned food that can be transported from long distances and stored until we need it, first in the supermarket, and then at home.

However, I think the amount of waste produce is also a result of our tendency to use something once and throw it away. We forget that even the cheapest plastic bag has used up valuable resources and energy to produce. We also forget that it is a source of pollution and difficult to dispose of.

I think, therefore, that governments need to raise this awareness in the general public. Children can be educated about environmental issues at school, but adults need to take action. Governments can encourage such action by putting taxes on packaging, such as plastic bags, by providing recycling services and by thing households and shops that do not attempt to recycle their waste.

With the political will, such measures could really reduce the amount of rubbish we produce. Certainly nobody wants to see our resources used up and our planet poisoned by waste.

(270 words)

model answer: 2

People today live in a more modern, wealthy, and civilized society, which means there is an abundance of convenient things we can afford and enjoy. While enjoying the convenience, we also create the inconvenience such as the massive garbage problem we see affecting the world today.

There are many reasons why more trash is created, but the major one is the invention of plastic stuff, which changes the way people live. For example, people stop carrying their own shopping bags or baskets because there are free plastic ones provided from the shopping centers. Also, we tend to use more and more disposable products so we don't need to do the cleaning jobs latter on. The plastic culture is getting popular because of our laziness.

In order to stop the synthetic culture, there are some measures the authorities must do to change people's habits. Firstly, the government could make a law to regulate the use of different plastic products. The purpose of the law is to make people aware of the amount of plastic trash they make and how they dispose of them. If they don't follow the regulations, they should be punished.

Another important thing the authorities can do is to educate people about the importance of recycling and continuously promote it. Two of the options would be for the government to teach people how to recycle through the advertisements on TV and arrange more recycling bins in more areas. Another way of doing it is through schools, so teachers can teach and encourage the young generations to do their part for the environment.

We only have one planet, and it is not only the governments' responsibilities to look after the environment, but also everybody who shares the same earth; we should do it now before it is too late!

Teacher, which paper is the more academic one; how would you score it?

TASKS

A. Write an assignment of around 500 words wherein you explain the IELTS testing system to a student. Some of these facts are not available in your notes – you will need to access this knowledge from the research material suggested in the course. Your assignment should deal with the following factors:

1. What do the letters IELTS stand for?
2. Where do student formally sit the IELTS examination?

3. What level of English is required to candidate for the IELTS test?
4. In the listening test, the student listens to a cassette. How many times can the cassette be listened to?
5. When doing the writing test, how many pieces of writing have to be completed?
6. Explain what kind of texts will be read in the academic reading paper and what is the content material of each section?
7. What is the limit for words required for the writing test?
8. How many people are present when the speaking test takes place?
9. Where do I write the answers to some of the tests?
10. What length of time is allowed to prepare for the speaking test?
11. How important is spelling?

(with acknowledgement to Macmillan Publishers Ltd 2004 – edited)

B. Write an assignment of around 500 words explaining how you would prepare an IELTS candidate for the exam. Outline the *process* you would follow and identify some of the possible problems you might encounter and address cultural nuances with regard to the method of teaching using the teacher-student approach.

C, Give reasons for your viewpoint about the place of grammar and vocabulary in IELTS preparation. Your assignment should be around 350 words in length.