

**Thomson Exam Essentials** is a new series of materials for students preparing for the major EFL/ESL examinations, such as First Certificate in English (FCE), Certificate in Advanced English (CAE), Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL®), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC®) and others. Each book in the series pays close attention to developing a detailed knowledge of the skills and strategies needed for success in each part or paper of the exams.

**IELTS Practice Tests** helps learners become aware of IELTS exam requirements, offers details about the format of the exam and helps learners develop the exam skills necessary for success. The book also offers extensive practice in all parts of the exam, using the actual test format. As well as students who are planning to take the IELTS exam, the book is also suitable for use by teachers of IELTS courses and by students and teachers involved in checking and improving academic English.

## 1 Taking the IELTS Exam

The IELTS exam, which is jointly managed by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL), the British Council and IDP: IELTS Australia, assesses the language ability of candidates who need to study or work where English is the language of communication. IELTS is recognised by universities and employers in many countries, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA, as well as by professional bodies, immigration authorities and other government agencies.

There are four parts to the IELTS exam: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking Modules, while the Reading and Writing Modules are available in two formats – Academic and General Training.

The Academic Reading and Writing Modules assess whether a candidate is ready to study or train in the medium of English. The General Training Modules focus on basic survival skills in a broad social and educational context, and are more suitable for candidates who are going to English-speaking countries for the purposes of work experience, non-degree level training or immigration.

A full breakdown of the format, task types and timing of each Module can be found on the inside flap of this *Practice Test* book.

IELTS candidates receive a Band Score from 1 to 9 for each Module of the test, and an Overall Band Score from 1 to 9, which is an average of the four Module scores. A breakdown of the nine Bands can be found on the cover flap of this book.

One mark is awarded for each correct answer in the Listening and Reading Modules. A confidential Band Score

conversion table is then used to translate these total marks into IELTS band scores. Scores are reported as a whole Band or a half Band.

Writing tasks are assessed independently by certified IELTS examiners, according to the 9-Band scale. Writing scripts are assessed on the following criteria:

### Content

**Task 1:** Has the writer included all the relevant information?

**Task 2:** Has the writer fully answered the question by dealing with all parts of it?

### Organisation

**Task 1:** Does the answer flow well and is it clear and easy to read?

**Task 2:** Does the answer flow well and is there a clear progression of opinions and ideas?

### Use of language

**Task 1:** Has the writer used appropriate linking words and phrases, and a good level of grammar? Is the vocabulary accurately used?

**Task 2:** Are ideas and opinions linked by appropriate words and phrases? Is the grammar and vocabulary accurate and not too simple?

The Speaking Module is also measured according to the 9-Band scale, based on the following criteria:

**Fluency and coherence:** Does the speaker talk in a logical and organised way? Is the speech reasonably continuous, without too many pauses or repetitions?

**Lexical resource:** Does the speaker use a variety of words and expressions in an appropriate way?

**Grammatical range and accuracy:** Does the speaker use a variety of grammatical structures, without too many mistakes, in order to convey his/her meaning effectively?

**Pronunciation:** Is the candidate's speech easy to understand? Is the pronunciation of sounds, words and phrases accurate, and does the speaker use appropriate intonation patterns?

For more information on the criteria used for assessing the Speaking Module, see page 88.

Further information about the exam can also be obtained from the IELTS website: [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

## 2 IELTS Practice Tests: contents

**IELTS Practice Tests** prepares candidates for the IELTS examination by providing **six full practice tests**, which follow the latest exam specifications.

There are **two guided tests**, which provide clear, authoritative and complete guidance on the task types featured in each section of the exam.

These guided tests are followed by **four tests (without guidance)**, which offer students thorough practice at a realistic exam level.

An additional **General Training section** contains the Reading and Writing Modules for two practice tests.

Together, these tests provide at least two opportunities to practise every task type, whilst covering as full a range as

possible of typical IELTS topic areas and situations.

The CDs and cassettes accompanying the book include the **audio materials** for the Listening Modules, recorded so as to reflect accurately the audio element of the actual exam.

A **writing bank** has sample answers for the writing tasks, for both Academic and General Training tests.

**IELTS Practice Tests with key** edition contains a comprehensive **answer key**, which includes detailed explanations of each answer for the Listening and Reading Modules, and an **annotated audio script**.

### 3 How to use *IELTS Practice Tests*

#### Students:

You can use this book in different ways, according to your needs: your level, your aims, how much time you have, if you are studying completely by yourself or with a class and teacher.

IELTS uses many task types and you need to be well prepared for them all in order to do well in the exam.

**IELTS Practice Tests** will help you to do this.

Use the chart on the inside flap to understand the overall content and format of the test. Look through Test 3 to see how the description in the chart matches the test.

#### Teachers:

Remember that IELTS is not like an exam that has a specific syllabus that it will test. Your skills will be needed to diagnose and address your students' needs in terms of lexis, structure, discourse, and so on. Because **IELTS Practice Tests** covers the full range of exam tasks and a comprehensive range of typical IELTS exam topics, it can help you to concentrate on the linguistic aspects of the course you teach.

#### Tests 1 and 2

##### Students:

Tests 1 and 2 contain valuable help in preparing for the exam. All the exam task types are represented and they are clearly headed for easy reference.

For each task, there is a **Task guide**, which gives you important facts and advice for that particular task type.

There is also a **Step-by-step guide** for each task type, which takes you through a series of carefully designed steps that will help you understand how to approach doing the task.

Model answers (on pages 199–206) are provided for all the writing tasks.

One way to use Tests 1 and 2 is to work your way through both tests. This will help you become well informed about what the IELTS exam involves. Alternatively, use Tests 1 and 2 as a sort of reference tool. Practise taking other tests in the book and use Tests 1 and 2 to get advice on particular task types.

#### Teachers:

This part of the **IELTS Exam Essentials** series could constitute the basis of a short intensive IELTS preparation course. It is also a useful place to check details of particular task types. The exercises and model answers can also be used as the starting points for skills classes.

#### Tests 3–6

##### Students:

These four complete tests can be used in a variety of ways. For example, you may:

- work through Tests 1 and 2 first, and use Tests 3–6 to practise what you have studied or
- begin with Tests 3–6, and when you come to each task type, check the task guides in Tests 1 and 2 to make sure you understand how to approach it.

You can use the Tests to create a self-study course:

- Work your way through Tests 1 and 2.
- Do Tests 3 and 4, returning to the task guides in Tests 1 and 2 to prepare yourself for each task type.
- Check your answers carefully – including the audio scripts for the listening sections – and keep notes about the areas where you have problems.
- Do Test 5, while checking your notes; when you reach a task type where you have had a problem before, review the task guides for Tests 1 and 2.
- Take Test 6 under test conditions (correct timing, silence, no dictionaries or reference books, etc.).

When you get an answer wrong, check to see which of the following happened:

- Did you mishear a word in the Listening?
- Did you read the question too quickly and not understand what to look for in the Reading?
- Did you make the wrong interpretation of what the graph represents in the Writing?
- Did you misunderstand what a word or phrase means?

Every question you get wrong is an opportunity to learn something that will help you later in the exam.

#### Teachers:

You can use the above steps with your students, either in-class or as a structured self-study programme. Encourage your students to build their understanding of the test with the explanatory key and to develop their ability to evaluate their own language and learning needs.

*Mark Harrison and Russell Whitehead, January 2005*