

Studying  
IELTS  
A Comprehensive  
Student Manual

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# 环球雅思备考指南

Anne Taib & Scott Hurley



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# Introduction

## In this chapter

- Special features of this book and DVD
- Format of the IELTS test
- Overview of IELTS test for academic purposes
- IELTS band scores

Welcome to *Studying IELTS – A Comprehensive Student Manual*. This manual provides excellent resources for developing your English and improving your IELTS test results. It is intended to assist moderate to good English speakers to achieve a suitable IELTS score for entry to a university or tertiary institution in an English-speaking country.

## Special features of this book and the DVD

*Studying IELTS – A Comprehensive Student Manual* consists of a book with a DVD; both are designed to assist intermediate level students to improve their scores. We have taken an approach that is very test-focussed because:

- research shows that familiarity with specific test formats improves test performance
- learning how to do the tests for each module prepares you for the tight time constraints of test conditions
- practising with materials that are based on the tests familiarises you with the exam so that you can approach the tests with confidence on test days
- the extensive range of resources ensures that you have the opportunity to develop your skills for each area: Listening; Academic Reading, Academic Writing and Speaking
- practice exercises provided in test formats that begin with shorter exercises build your skills for tackling full-length sample tests
- detailed explanations of the demands of the questions together with practice examples enable you to become **skilled and time-focussed** ready for the actual IELTS tests.

**The book and the DVD are designed to be used as an integrated package.**

**The book contains:**

- detailed preparation sections for each module: Listening, Academic Reading, Academic Writing

and Speaking

- examples of the many different question types that occur within each of them
- a thorough explanation of the skills needed to help you excel in each of the tests
- excellent strategies for developing and using your English skills
- valuable practice exercises for individual study
- activities suitable for class work and individual study
- transcripts of the Listening exercises and tests
- answers to all exercises for Listening, Academic Reading, Writing plus comments on candidates' video interviews for Speaking.

**The DVD contains:**

- practice exercises for the Listening Module
- two complete sample Listening tests
- video interviews with non-native speakers of English for the Speaking Module.

## Format of the IELTS test

The IELTS test is divided into four different components, called modules:

- the Listening Module
- the Reading Module
- the Writing Module
- the Speaking Module.

Both Reading and Writing are given in 'Academic' or 'General Training' versions. **This package covers only the academic versions for these two components** as it is specifically designed for students intending to study at tertiary level in English-speaking countries.

## Overview of IELTS test for academic purposes

### Listening

There are four sections, each with recorded passages and 10 questions, giving a total of 40 questions. Total time is 60 minutes. You have extra time to fill in the Listening Test Answer Sheet. All students take the same test.

### Academic Reading

There are three reading passages, each followed by 13 or 14 questions, a total of 40 questions for the test. Total time is 60 minutes. You have no extra time for filling in the Reading Test Answer Sheet. All students preparing for the Academic Reading Module take the same test.

### Academic Writing

There are two writing tasks:

- an information-transfer exercise to describe the key content from a set of diagrams (at least 150 words)
- a 250-word essay on a social issue.

Total time is 60 minutes. All students preparing for the Academic Writing Module take the same test.

### Speaking

This is an interview with an assessor in three parts, totalling 11–14 minutes. All students take the same test.

## IELTS band scores

After your four tests are assessed, you will receive a band score, from 0-9, for each module. The lowest possible score is 0 and 9 is the highest. Look closely at the descriptors for your band levels and make sure you discuss their meaning with your teacher.

9	<b>Expert User</b> – <i>Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.</i>
8	<b>Very Good User</b> – <i>Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.</i>
7	<b>Good User</b> – <i>Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies or misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.</i>
6	<b>Competent User</b> – <i>Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies or misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.</i>
5	<b>Modest User</b> – <i>Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.</i>
4	<b>Limited User</b> – <i>Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.</i>
3	<b>Extremely Limited User</b> – <i>Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.</i>



<b>2</b>	<b>Intermittent User</b> – <i>No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>Non User</b> – <i>Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.</i>
<b>0</b>	<b>Did not attempt the test</b> – <i>No assessable information provided.</i>

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**NOTE: recently half-scores have been allowed across all modules. For example, in the past you would have received either a rating of 6 or 7, but now it would be possible to receive a 6.5 or a 7.5 rating.**

## Writing and Speaking Band Descriptors (Public Use)

To ensure that you have a comprehensive package, we have included a copy of the Band Descriptors for Public Use on the following:

- Writing Task 1
- Writing Task 2
- the Speaking Module.

While these are readily available on the web, it is always useful to have them at your fingertips when you are preparing for such an important test; they give you very detailed information about the differences between the band levels. Look closely at the differences between levels so that you are clear about the demands of each test in the levels you are aiming for. These help you to understand what is expected of you and indicate where you need to focus your language development to improve your skills.

## Sample answer sheets for Listening and Reading

You will also find sample answer sheets that are used in the official IELTS tests for the Listening and Reading tests. These are included within the relevant chapters to familiarise you with them. You will find them repeated in the back of the book so that you can photocopy them for use when practising short exercises. We strongly recommend that you use them for any full-length tests that you do in your preparation.

# Chapter 1 The Listening Module

## In this chapter

- Overview and relevance to tertiary study
- Listening Module Sections
- Practice questions for Sections 1–4
- Essential test information

## Overview and relevance to tertiary study

### Overview

The Listening Module is designed to develop your understanding of spoken English. Your test requires you to listen closely to individuals and groups speaking. You need to show that you can understand information such as facts, figures, names and dates as well as other information that is conveyed in everyday conversations. You may be required to complete notes or plans for the day, fill in forms, follow directions, understand surveys, or other similar tasks. More complex kinds of listening will also be required: listening to a small group talking about an academic subject and following an academic lecture well enough to provide answers on the content.

### Relevance to tertiary study

The IELTS Listening Module in this book helps to prepare you for a university or tertiary institution in an English-speaking country that requires a score of 7 for entry. In the written chapters and the material on the DVD, you will find strategies and practice exercises to assist you to gain a score in the intermediate to advanced range.

The IELTS Listening Module tests your ability to understand spoken material relevant to your tertiary studies. For example, you will have to listen to and follow lectures and tutorials; you could also receive group projects to do with a number of other students that will require discussion amongst you.

You will also need to understand many different kinds of non-academic speech on campus as you buy books, register for classes, meet with friends, and so on. The better your English skills, the better your performance will be in your tertiary studies. If you have achieved well in IELTS, you will also feel much more confident in everyday and social settings.

## Listening Module Sections

The Listening test is divided into four sections. In each one you will listen to a recording and then answer 10 questions. Each recording lasts about five minutes and will only be played *once*.

Sections	What you will hear	Format	Question Types
<b>Section 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A conversation between two people</li> <li>• Set in a social or semi-official context</li> <li>• Discussing a non-academic subject (speaking on everyday social topics).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 questions</li> <li>• 1 example answer is provided</li> <li>• A very short time (30 seconds) to look at questions before recording is played</li> <li>• A brief introduction to the scenario will be given at the beginning of the recording</li> <li>• The recording is stopped halfway.</li> </ul>	<b>Any Question Type</b> (See Chapter 2, Question Types).
<b>Section 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One speaker – monologue – or a dialogue but with one speaker doing most of the speaking</li> <li>• Set in a social or semi-official context</li> <li>• Discussing a non-academic subject (speaking on everyday social topics).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 questions</li> <li>• <b>NO SAMPLE ANSWER</b></li> <li>• A very short time (30 seconds) to look at questions before recording is played</li> <li>• A brief introduction to the scenario will be given at the beginning of the recording</li> <li>• The recording is stopped halfway.</li> </ul>	<b>Any Question Type</b> (See Chapter 2, Question Types).
<b>Section 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A conversation between 2 to 4 people</li> <li>• Set in an academic or educational context</li> <li>• An educational subject or subjects related to the university environment (for example, a student conference with a lecturer).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 questions</li> <li>• <b>NO SAMPLE ANSWER</b></li> <li>• A very short time (30 seconds) to look at questions before recording is played</li> <li>• A brief introduction to the scenario will be given at the beginning of the recording</li> <li>• The recording is stopped halfway.</li> </ul>	<b>Any Question Type</b> (See Chapter 2, Question Types).
<b>Section 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture or talk by one speaker</li> <li>• Set in an educational or academic context</li> <li>• An academic subject similar to one in a university course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 questions</li> <li>• <b>NO SAMPLE ANSWER</b></li> <li>• A very short time (30 seconds) to look at questions before recording is played</li> <li>• A brief introduction to the scenario will be given at the beginning of the recording</li> <li>• You will have to listen to the entire recording <b>WITHOUT A STOP</b>.</li> </ul>	<b>Any Question Type</b> (See Chapter 2, Question Types).



## Practice questions for sections 1-4

### Section 1 practice sample questions

The conversation between two people will be a discussion of a **non-academic subject**. This means it will be some kind of conversation between two people on a subject unrelated to university study. It could be:

- an **informal conversation** in a social setting; for example, a conversation between two friends about a film
- a **more formal conversation**; for example, a person calling a rental-car desk, or someone asking a receptionist for information about a company.

**Section 1 questions will mainly require you to identify information** such as facts, details, dates, specific names, numbers, costs or prices, addresses, specific times, a person's occupation and/or their title and so on.

**Study the questions below for 30 seconds.** What does the format of the questions tell you about the recording you are about to listen to? For example, what are the two people discussing?

Complete the notes below.

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

**Notes on a New Car**

**Model type:** Tornado

**Comes with:** 1.....

**Extra features:** 2.....

Air bags

3.....

### ⊙ Listen to the recording

Play **Track 1** and fill in answers to the questions as you listen, either here or on a spare sheet of paper.

### Analyse your answers

Check your answers in Chapter 24: Answers. If any of your answers were wrong, go to the DVD transcript in Chapter 23 and read it closely to see why.

### Section 2 practice sample questions

The speakers will be talking about everyday social topics on a **non-academic subject**. There may be one or two speakers in the recording, but all the relevant information will come from **one** of the speakers.