

Preparation Guide for IELTS Candidates



IELTS™



**WELCOME
TO
IELTS
WITH MY IPE**

Introduction

Thank you for downloading this guide to help you prepare for your upcoming IELTS test. We hope you find it useful and that you can enter the exam room confident that you can get the best band-levels that you are capable of.

For most IELTS Candidates, obtaining their required band-levels is the prelude to a positive, life-changing experience. Whether it is for Permanent Residency, admission to an Australian, Canadian or British University, professional registration or for Sponsorship, life will never be the same again, in an exciting, new way.

The purpose of this document is to advise you of many factors that affect your preparation and to enable you to get the maximum score possible.

Your Instructor

My name is **John Blackett-Smith** and I prefer to be called **John** ... not Teacher or Sir.

My contact details are:

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My purpose is to lead you through your preparation for IELTS and to fill in any gaps in your knowledge or experience. In my courses, candidates are encouraged to ask questions. This can be during a class or after class using email or text message. There is no such thing as a silly question.

I teach English in many different forms:

- IELTS
- English as a Second Language
- Business English
- Business Skills including negotiation, Business Planning, Presentations, Public Relations and Damage Control
- Emergency English
- Conversational English
- How to Speak English Like a Native Speaker

I have earned my living through the use of English for nearly my entire working life ... Advertising and Marketing, Television Writer, Producer, Director and Cameraman, Journalist and Current Affairs Producer, Teacher, Tutor and Guide.

Before You Commence

- Please ensure that you have some equipment for taking your own notes. An exercise book is ideal and ensures that your notes are all in the one place.
- Decide if you will be taking the IELTS test on paper or the Computer Delivered test.
- Decide when you will sit for your next IELTS test including the date and Test Centre location. It is helpful in creating your study plan to have a specific deadline to work to.
- Email me the results of any IELTS, PTE, ISL/PR or TOEFL test you have undertaken in the past 3 years, if you are taking my classes.
- Ensure you have a fast and stable Internet connection and that your camera, microphone and speakers are working well. You will need this for listening to audio tracks and for doing your mock tests. You can test your Internet connection at any time by going to: <https://speedtest.com> and follow the prompts.

Conduct of Classes

Should you decide to take one of my one-to-one courses all classes are held on-line using zoom. Prior to the first class you will receive, via email, the link to access the class. This link will be used for all classes and for any scheduled meetings, Q&A or reviews.

The link will open a new browser window or tab where you will be offered the choice of a browser-based session or a specific zoom software-based session. Always choose software-based. It is faster and both video and audio are better quality.

When you are logged in (automatically) to zoom, you will be placed into a Waiting Room. I will be advised that you are there and will admit you to our classroom

Please ensure both audio and video are enabled and that your name is shown, in English, in the lower left corner of your picture.



All classes will use keynote (powerpoint) presentations. These are not the traditional presentation formats. Most slides contain more information than usually expected.

After each class, you will be sent a PDF file of the entire presentation(s). These PDF files build into a very detailed and handy reference for review and study. Occasionally, I will also send you supplementary material, tips and hints that you can also incorporate into your reference file.

Can you “go it alone”?

Undoubtedly, some candidates can prepare themselves. This is particularly true for those who have sat the IELTS test several times before and whose scores were impacted by a lack of practice. However, there are several important drawbacks that make a guided course preferable:

- You need feedback on your efforts ... particularly writing and speaking. Usually, when you make mistakes, you are unaware of them. So, there is no opportunity to improve and you will lose valuable points in the test.
- It often takes time to find the answers to any questions you may have. With a tutor, you don't have to go searching and you know that the answers are correct.
- There is a lot of fake information and material out there on the Internet. Often it is difficult to determine what is true, accurate information. The result ... failure to satisfy the Examiner's requirements and loss of points.
- It can be “false economy” to go it alone to save on tutorial costs. Anyone who has had to repeatedly sit the test will tell you that sitting the test again and again can cost more than paying for a good tutor. Then, of course, there are the disappointments and frustration of repeated failure.
- The owners of IELTS - British Council, IDP and Cambridge Education - all recommend some form of tutoring or guidance in your

preparation to sit the IELTS

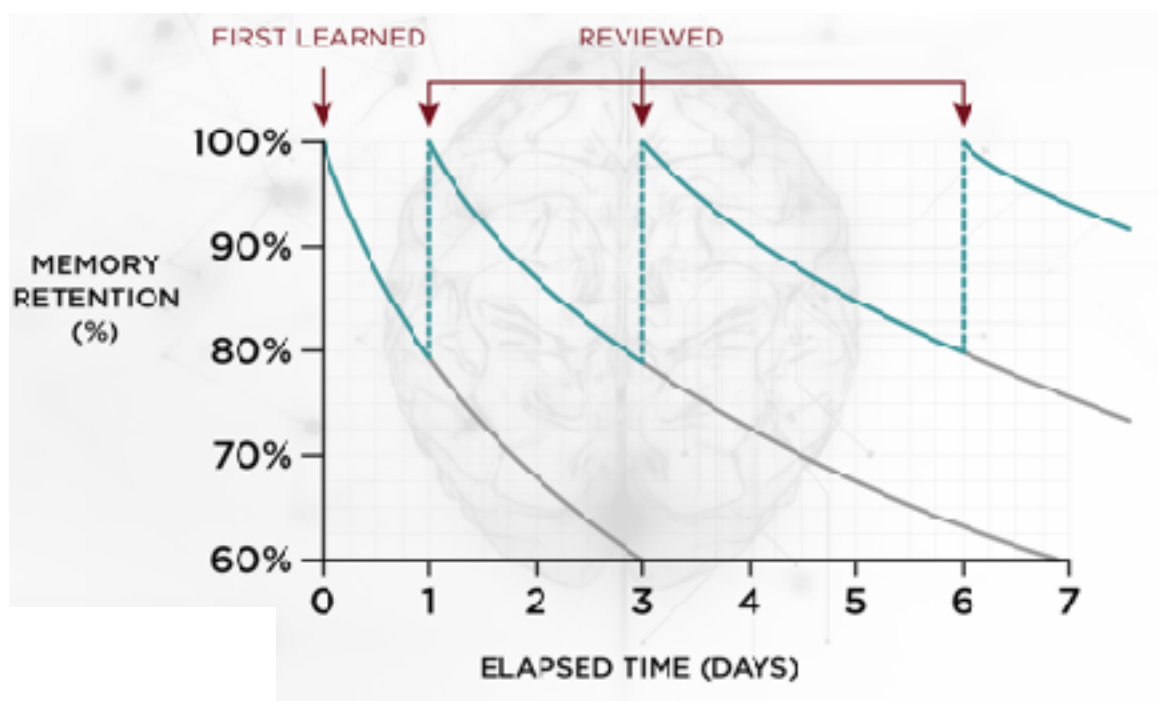


If you choose a Tutor-guided class ...

After every class, I email PDF copies of all of the materials used during the class and often I will send some supplementary material to further explain class content or to communicate additional hints, tips and other helpful information. If my student is set homework (and they usually are), they will also receive any material required.

There has been much research done on the psychology of guided learning and information retention. The following graph dramatically illustrates the reduction in retention of learning over time. It is vital that you review the course material within 24 hours of the end of the class then again at 72 hours and at 144 hours

The Forgetting Curve



Most of us have commitments that are difficult to delay or defer. However, as I said earlier, achieving the required score in your IELTS test is a life-changing milestone. You should therefore do everything you possibly can to:

- 🕒 **Review the content of your class within 24 hours**
- 🕒 **Submit all homework within 48 hours of the class**

A Good Tutor will Check and Measure Progress

My practice is to constantly measure the progress of each and every candidate in order to ensure that lessons are effective and to detect and fix any problems as early as possible. **This means it is important that all homework is completed and sent within 24 hours of the end of a class.**

Some students elect not to submit any, or all, homework. This is akin to competing in a 400 metre footrace and being the only runner wearing a blindfold ... you could win, but you are more likely to fall by the wayside while the other athletes, who are properly prepared to race, continue to the finish line and you have wasted all your training efforts.



Likewise, with mistakes. These are a powerful way to learn. There should never be any **judgements** made during any course. If you make a mistake, recognise the mistake and learn from it.

The 10 Steps for Successful IELTS Preparation

These same steps apply when you are self-preparing and are included in most good Tutor-led IELTS Preparation courses.

1. Create a daily routine

For the most effective IELTS test preparation, the first step is to establish a schedule you can follow every day. You must stick to this schedule, even if it's just half an hour at a time. Committing to a routine and learning gradually are the best ways to get good results.



way, studying will become a habit. Don't forget that studying for half an hour every day is more effective than studying for a couple of hours once a week.

Only add new activities to your study schedule when you're familiar with previous ones to avoid overwhelming yourself -

and make sure all your sessions connect to IELTS topics.

Organise your schedule so you can set aside the same time every day. That

2. Focus on your weaknesses

You make better progress in test preparation when you know about your strengths and weaknesses. You'll know exactly which skills you'll need to work on as you prepare for IELTS. By focusing on the areas where you need to improve,



you'll make the most of your study time.

For example, if you have strong reading skills but you're not great at writing, it might be tempting to keep practising reading exercises - but you'll get a better overall

score if you include more writing exercises in your study sessions.

3. Underline or highlight important points

The underlining technique is a common way to help us memorise what we learn. When you underline important information, it immediately stands out when you look at the page.

You can also use it alongside other study techniques. It's especially helpful when you want to create a summary or outline based on keywords in a text.

Here's how to use the underlining technique:

- 1 Skim the text to get the general idea.
- 2 Read more carefully to find important points.
- 3 Read again and underline, highlight, or mark what you want to remember.
- 4 Do one last reading to look for any points you've missed.

4. Create mind or concept maps

Mapping is one of the most common study techniques. It's a visual technique for capturing and remembering information. It's so effective for test preparation because we process what we **see** more quickly than what we **hear or read**.

Use a mind map to visualise ideas and link them to one important point. This kind of map usually uses a radial structure with the key idea at its core, and then related ideas linked by lines.

This type of graphic is great for associating words with images and colours which makes them more memorable.

On the other hand, use a concept map to organise words and ideas you've learnt together. This type of map looks more like a tree, with one or more central ideas in boxes, and then new ideas emerging from them and connecting with one another, like branches of a tree.



5. Summarise what you've learned

Taking the main idea and contextual clues from a lesson can save you time. When revising, you have a shorter amount to read and fewer unnecessary, distracting details.

Here are the steps to build a great summary:

- Read the text you want to summarise a few times.
- Separate it into different sections (these can be based on paragraphs)
- Write the main idea for each section
- Underline or highlight any contextual clues
- Use all this information to write the summary

6. Make flashcards

Flashcards are excellent for memorising a new language and combining it with what you've already learnt. They can help you revise the language you'll need to use in your IELTS test.



One advantage is that you can design them in a way that suits you. Personalising them can help you memorise what's on them more effectively.

Here are some tips for creating flashcards as part of your test preparation:

- Identify the topic or language area you need to learn.
- If there's more than one topic or language area, give them different colours.
- Number the cards so you can order them.
- Give them titles and subtitles.
- Highlight the most important points.
- Store them safely together in a plastic wallet or a folder.

7. Focus on the core four skills

Practising all four language skills - **reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills** - is essential for thorough test preparation.

Here are some exercises you can do to improve your skills:

Reading

- Read in English for 30 minutes every day.
- Find books, magazines, and online articles that interest you.
- Try to guess new language from context before looking it up.

Writing

- Write small essays about your experiences and interests, for example, travel and hobbies.
- Use the new vocabulary you've learnt in your writing.
- Summarise a news article or short story in English.
- Listen to songs and write as many of the lyrics as you can.

Listening

- Listen and watch things like songs, TV shows, and news broadcasts in English.
- Get familiar with different accents in English.
- Practise listening to audio repeatedly to see if you can understand details you didn't the first time.

Speaking

- Speak to yourself to build your confidence and practise your pronunciation.
- Join a conversation club so you can practise speaking with others.
- See if your family, friends, or colleagues are happy to spend 15 minutes speaking in English sometimes.

Every speaker of English as a Second Language has difficulty forming some sounds. The most common are the th~ and the r~ sounds. Depending on your native language there can be other difficult sounds. It is important that you identify those sounds and obtain some exercises to help you develop the correct sound.

It is not possible to assess your speaking efforts without external assistance. The best, obviously, is your Tutor. The next best is another native English speaker and the voice recorder in your phone is also very helpful. It's always with you, you can store recordings and you can replay what you said as many times as you need to in order to thoroughly assess your efforts and, of course, you can attach the audio

file to an email and send it to your Tutor, if necessary. **Record all speaking practice and remedial exercises and then critically assess your effort.**

8. Study the format of the IELTS test

It's best to know and understand the structure of any test before you take it so you can prepare yourself. An important part of preparing for IELTS is learning exactly what you'll be asked in each section of the test, getting to know the task types, and learning techniques for completing these test tasks.

In our online preparation courses, we give you a breakdown of what's included in all the sections. We tell you the number of questions and explain how you should answer them.

You'll also learn the best strategies for test preparation and more tips on how to prepare.

9. Make the most of apps

There are many apps you can use to practise different skills. You can download apps from Google Play or the App Store to your smartphone or tablet. That means you'll be able to study when you're on the go.

Apps have lots of different activities to help with test preparation, including grammar tips, quizzes, and sample questions - so you won't get bored!

10. Practise with mock tests

The British Council offers free IELTS practice tests for all four skills, covering both the Academic and General Training tests.

It's essential to practise with these mock tests under timed conditions, simulating the actual test duration. This approach will help you be better prepared on test day.

After completing the practice tests, you can compare your answers with the model answers available on the British Council website. These model answers include explanations, helping you understand how different answers are scored.

At the beginning of your preparation for IELTS, you should sit a paid mock test on preply.com. You should do the test under exam conditions. After you finish, your efforts will be marked by qualified examiners who will also provide a clear indication of the areas you need to improve. Often, they will also suggest how you can go about overcoming the noted weaknesses.

Likewise, at the end of your course or preparation, it is wise to do another prep test in order to test your preparedness for the test and the likely band levels you can achieve. Money well-spent and nowhere near the cost of sitting the actual IELTS test.

Language Tools

As you will discover (or, have discovered already) IELTS makes liberal use of synonyms. These are usually associated with keywords. An IELTS preparation course should provide you with the tools you need to identify and use keywords and to identify and learn synonyms. The usefulness of these tools extends beyond the IELTS test.

There are several other tools that can be made available.

These include:

Clarity

Examines the many factors that contribute to clear, concise and grammatically correct writing. The Class is 1½ hours and covers such things as:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Direction of Information | 7. Dangling Modifiers |
| 2. Use of Transitional Words | 8. Parallel Structures |
| 3. Subordinate Clauses | 9. Passive Voice |
| 4. Avoid Noun Strings | 10. Multiple Negatives |
| 5. Nominalisation | 11. Action Verbs |
| 6. Misplaced Modifiers | 12. Pronoun References |

Basic Grammar

Sentences

Parts of Sentences

Sentence structures

Parts of Speech

Nouns

Adjectives

Adverbs

Conjunctions

Pronouns

Verbs

Prepositions

Using a Print Dictionary

Parallelism

Meaning in Context

Deriving the meanings of new words from the words and expressions surrounding them

Self-Development

How to improve your English

Syntax and Diction

Effects of Diction and Syntax

Sentence Patterns

Parallel Structures

Punctuation

Terminology

Meaning and use

Pluralising Nouns

Rules and conventions

Exceptions

Oddities

Spelling

Rules and exceptions

How to improve your spelling

Vocabulary Building

Increase your vocabulary

Sources for practice

Figurative Speech

Hyperbole Simile

Metaphor Idiom

Personification Litotes

Alliteration Allusion

Onomatopoea Oxymoron

Speak English Like a Native Speaker

English is spoken differently to every other language. Yet, no one teaches their English as a Second Language students **HOW** to speak it like a native speaker and how to understand exactly what native speakers are saying. As a result we experience confusion, misunderstanding and miscommunication.

I have researched, designed and developed this course to teach students how English is spoken by native speakers and to explain why English is spoken the way it is by native speakers.

The course includes detailed explanations of all of the components that create and affect native English speech and a wide and varied range of practice exercises to teach the student to speak like a native speaker and to understand what is being said by native speakers.

This is a 12 x 1 hour course.

... and, Finally

IELTS is not an exam in the traditional sense. There is no syllabus. Rather it is a measurement of your ability to use the English language, both input and output, easily and flexibly in order to make yourself understood and to understand what you read and hear.

In the absence of a syllabus I use four main elements to design my courses:

- The Public Band Descriptors provided by British Council. These are extraordinarily difficult to understand and frequently require a language expert to interpret them and then provide that information to candidates in a form that is easily understood. Every class that I teach is based on meeting the requirements of the Public Band Descriptors.
- Explaining what the Examiner expects, then delivering it.
- Frequent consultation with British Council
- Research - continuous over 15 years

As I said in my Introduction, achieving the required score in IELTS is life-changing for most candidates ... in the best possible way. I will do my very best to prepare you for your test but ... ultimate success is in your hands.

I wish you all the very best of luck.



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Available Courses

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ★ IELTS Preparation | ★ Business English |
| ★ English as a Second Language (ESL) | ★ Business Skills |
| ★ Speak English Like a Native Speaker | ★ Job Seeking & Interview skills |
| ★ Conversation Skills | ★ Emergency English
(for travelers and new-arrivals) |