

THE TEST COMPONENTS

Listening

Timing: Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes' transfer time)

Questions: There are 40 questions

A variety of question types is used, chosen from following: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labelling, from completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, summary completion, sentence completion, short-answer questions

Test Parts: There are 4 sections

Section 1 is a conversation between two people set in an everyday social context (e.g. a conversation in an accommodation agency)

Section 2 is a monologue set in an everyday social context (e.g. a speech about local facilities or a talk about the arrangements for meals during a conference)

Section 4 is a monologue on an academic subject (e.g. a university lecture)

Each section is heard once only

A variety of voices and native-speaker accents is used

Skills assessed: A wide range of listening skills is assessed, including understanding of main ideas and specific factual information; recognising opinions, attitudes and purpose of a speaker; and following the development of an argument

Marking: Each correct answer receives 1 mark scores out of converted to the IELTS 9-band scale scores are reported in whole and half bands

Reading

Timing: 60 minutes (no extra transfer time)

Questions: There are 40 questions

A variety of question types is used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, identifying information (True/False/Not Given), identifying writer's views/claims (yes/no/not given), matching information, matching heading features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, flowchart completion, diagram label completion, short-answer questions

Test Parts: There are 3 sections

The total text length is 2,150-2,750 words

Academic Reading

Each section contains one long text. Texts are authentic and are taken from books, journals, magazines and newspapers. They have been written for a non-specialist audience and are on academic topics of general interest. Texts are appropriate to, and accessible to candidates entering undergraduate or postgraduate courses or seeking professional registration. Texts range from the descriptive and factual to the discursive and analytical. Texts may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts contain technical terms, then a simple glossary is provided

General Training Reading

Section 1 contains two or three short texts, one of which may be composite (consisting of 6-8 short texts related by topic, e.g. hotel advertisements). Topics are relevant to everyday life in an English-speaking country

Section 2 contains two short factual texts focusing on work-related issues (e.g. applying for jobs, company policies, pay and conditions, workplace facilities, staff development and training)

Section 3 contains one longer, more complex text on a topic of general interest

Texts are authentic and are taken from notices, advertisements, company handbooks, official documents, magazines and newspapers

Skills assessed: a wide range of reading skills is assessed, including reading for gist, reading for main ideas, reading for detail; understanding inferences and implied meaning; recognising a writer's opinions, attitudes and purpose; and following the development of an argument

Marking: Each correct answer receives 1 mark scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale scores are reported in whole and half bands

Writing

Timing: 60 minutes

Tasks: There are 2 tasks

Candidates are required to write at least 150 words for Task 1 and at least 250 words for Task 2

Test Parts: There are 2 parts

Academic writing

In Task 1, candidates are presented with a graph, table chart or diagram and are asked to describe, summarise or explain the information in their own words. They may be asked to describe and explain data, describe the stages of a process, how something works or describe an object or event

In Task 2, candidates are asked to write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem

The issues raised are of general interest to, suitable for and easily understood by candidates entering undergraduate or postgraduate studies or seeking professional registration

Responses to Task 1 and Task 2 should be written in a formal style

General Training Writing

In Task 1, candidates are presented with a situation and are asked to write a letter requesting information or explaining the situation. The letter may be personal, semi-formal or formal in style

In Task 2, candidates are asked to write an essay response to a point of view, argument or problem. The essay can be slightly more personal in style than the Academic writing Task 2 essay

Topics are of general interest

Skills assessed: In both tasks, candidates are assessed on their ability to write a response which is appropriate in terms of content, the organization of ideas, and the accuracy and range of vocabulary and grammar

Academic Writing

In Task 1, depending on the task type, candidates are assessed on their ability to organize, present and possibly compare data; to describe the stages of a procedure; to describe an object or event or sequence of events; to explain how something works

In Task 2, depending on the task type, candidates are assessed on their ability to present a solution to a problem; to present and justify an opinion; to compare and contrast evidence, opinions and implications; to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument

General Training Writing

In Task 1, depending on the task type, candidates are assessed on their ability to engage in personal correspondence in order to: elicit and provide general factual information; express needs, wants, likes and dislikes; express opinions (views, complaints etc.)

In Task 2, candidates are assessed on their ability to provide general factual information; to outline a problem and present a solution; to present and possibly justify an opinion; to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument

Marking: Candidates are assessed on their performance on each task by certificated IELTS examiners according to the four criteria of the IELTS Writing Test Band Descriptors (task achievement/response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy). The public version of descriptors can be found at

www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx

Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score

Scores are reported in whole and half bands

Speaking

Timing: 11-14 minutes

Tasks: The speaking test is a 3-part face-to-face oral interview with an examiner

The speaking test is recorded

Test parts: There are 3 parts

Part 1 introduction and interview (4-5 minutes)

The examiner introduces him/herself and asks the candidate to introduce him/herself and confirm his/her identity. The examiner asks the candidate general question on familiar topics, e.g. home, family, work, studies and interest.

Part 2 individual long turn (3-4 minutes)

The examiner give the candidate a task card which asks the candidate to talk about a particular topic and which includes points which the candidate can cover in their talk. The candidate is given 1 minute to prepare their talk, and is given a pencil and paper to make notes. The candidate talks for 1-2 minutes on the topic. The examiner then asks the candidate one or two question on the same topic

Part 3 Two-way discussion (4-5 minutes)

The examiner asks further question which are connected to the topic of Part 2. These questions give the candidate an opportunity to discuss more abstract issues and ideas

Skills assessed: A wide range of speaking skills is assessed, including the ability to communicate opinions and information on everyday topics and common experiences and situations by answering a range of questions; the ability to speak at length on a given topic using appropriate language and organizing ideas coherently; and the ability to express and justify opinions and to analyse, discuss and speculate about issues.

Marking: Candidates are assessed on their performance throughout the test by certificated IELTS examiners according to the four criteria of the IELTS Speaking Test Band Descriptors (fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, pronunciation). The public version of the band descriptors can be found at www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx

Scores are reported in whole and half bands.

