

# IELTS Writing

## How long is the Writing paper?

The Writing paper lasts one hour. Within that time, you must complete two writing tasks. Writing Task 2 carries more marks than Writing Task 1.

## What will I need to write about?

There are two separate writing tests, one for Academic candidates and one for General Training candidates. Before enrolling, you need to decide which test is best for you. See the website [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org) for advice on this. You will be given two specific writing tasks as follows.

Task		Timing	What do I have to do?
<b>Academic Writing</b>	<b>1</b>	20 minutes	Describe visual information (e.g. a diagram, chart, graph or table).
	<b>2</b>	40 minutes	Write an essay. You may be asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide a solution</li><li>• evaluate a problem</li><li>• compare and contrast different ideas or opinions</li><li>• challenge an argument or idea.</li></ul>
<b>General Training Writing</b>	<b>1</b>	20 minutes	Respond to a given situation (e.g. by writing a letter). You may be asked to request information or explain a situation.
	<b>2</b>	40 minutes	Write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem.

## How is the Writing paper assessed?

A trained assessor will read your answers and award a mark based on the following criteria.

Task	Criteria	What do these criteria mean?
Writing Task 1	<b>Task Achievement</b>	Did you answer the question fully and write 150 words?
Writing Task 2	<b>Task Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did your answer address all of the points in the question?</li><li>• Did you provide a balanced argument and support your ideas with evidence and examples?</li><li>• Were all of your ideas relevant to the question?</li><li>• Did you write 250 words?</li></ul>
Both tasks	<b>Coherence and Cohesion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is your writing easy to understand?</li><li>• Are your ideas well organised and clearly linked?</li></ul>
	<b>Lexical Resource</b>	Did you use a wide range of vocabulary accurately and effectively?
	<b>Grammatical Range and Accuracy</b>	Did you use a wide range of grammatical structures accurately and effectively?

Writing Task 2 is worth more marks than Writing Task 1. The assessor will combine your two scores to obtain one final score.

## How can I improve my Writing paper score?

You can improve your score by making sure you answer each question fully and remembering the test tips in this unit. This unit will also tell you the writing skills you need to practise in order to achieve your best score. Before the test, practise writing quickly and neatly and make sure you **do not** use bullet points, notes or abbreviations or prepared answers. Studying all aspects of English, including vocabulary and grammar, will also help improve your score.

# Writing skills

## 1 Academic Writing Task 1 – Describing a chart, table or graph

In this unit you will practise:

- understanding Academic Writing Task 1
- understanding charts, tables and graphs
- identifying relevant information
- improving your Task Achievement score

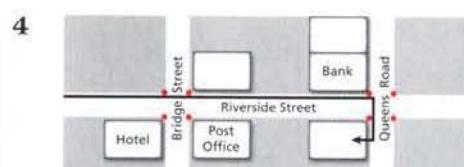
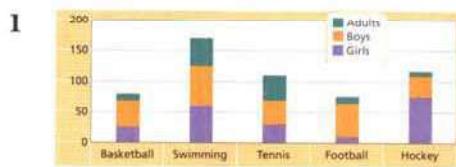
### 1 Understanding graphs, tables and charts

IELTS Writing Task 1 presents you with visual information that you need to describe.

#### 1.1 Label examples of visual information 1–6 with words A–F.

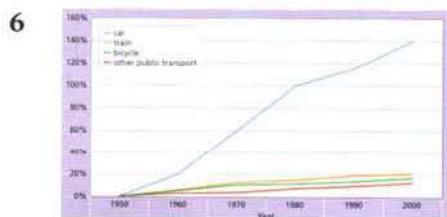
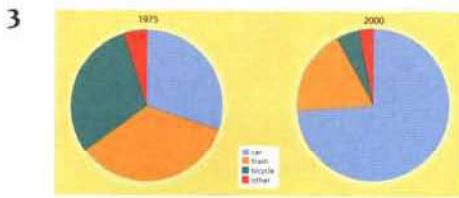
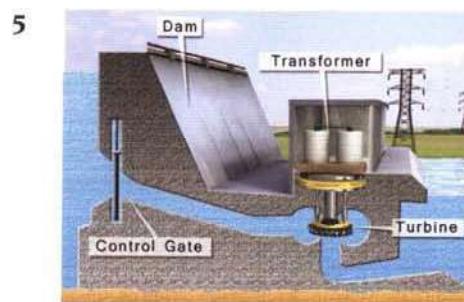
- A diagram  
B map  
C pie chart

- D table  
E bar chart  
F graph



2

WINNING TEAMS	GOLD	SILVER
USA	929	729
Soviet Union	395	319
UK	207	255
France	191	212
Germany	163	163
Italy	190	157
Sweden	142	160



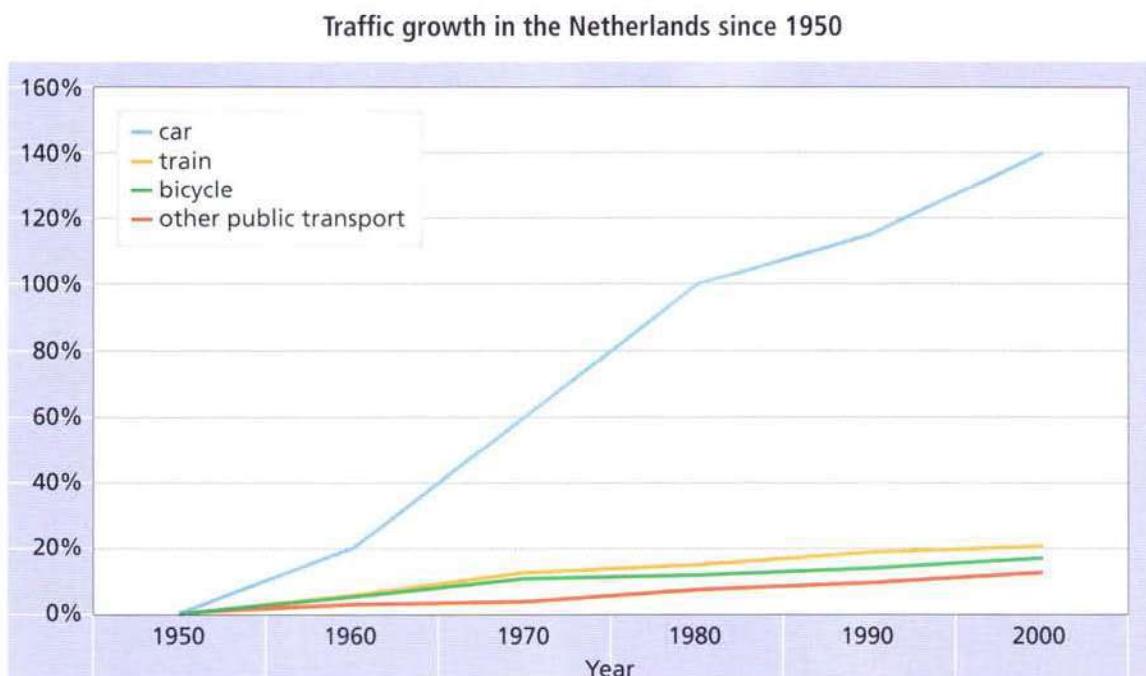
## Writing skills

You only have 20 minutes to complete this task, so practise reading and understanding this type of information quite quickly.

**1.2** Spend a minute looking at the graph below. Mark any information you think is important with a highlighter or pencil.

**1.3** Answer these questions.

- 1 What is being measured and how? (e.g. is the information in millions or as a percentage?)
- 2 Is there a time element to the information? (If yes, what is the gap between each year shown?)
- 3 Are two or more things being compared? (What are they?)



**1.4** This description of the graph in 1.3 contains seven mistakes. Find the mistakes and correct them.

The graph shows the increases in traffic in England from 1960 to 2010. During this time, car traffic increased by just over 150%, while train traffic increased by 40 percent, bicycle traffic increased by approximately 20%, and other public transport traffic actually decreased by about 20%.

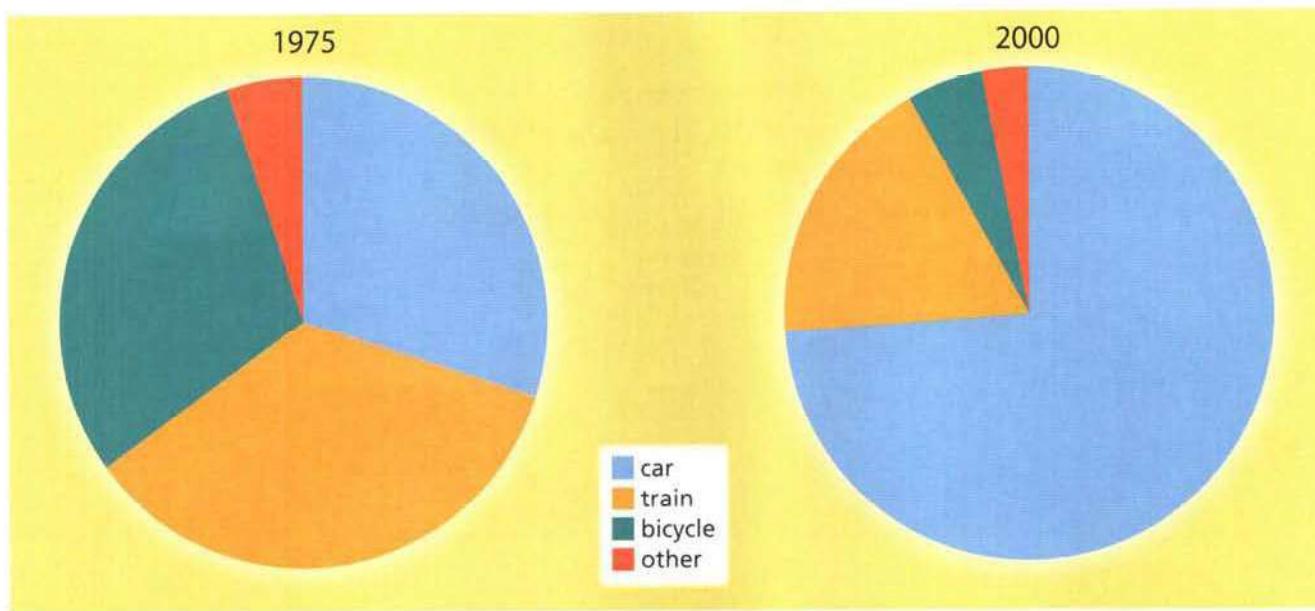


**Test Tip** You will be assessed on the type of information you write about, as well as the language that you use. If you give information that is incorrect or inaccurate, then you will receive a lower score.

The visual information may also be presented in a bar chart, table or a pie chart. You must limit your description to the information presented to you.

**1.5** Study the information presented in these pie charts carefully, then complete the task.

Proportion of journeys made in the Netherlands according to transport type



Look at statements 1–6 and say whether the information

- A *is true according to the data*
- B *is incorrect according to the data*
- C *cannot be verified from the data*

- 1 The two pie charts tell us the number of vehicles being used in the Netherlands in 1975 and 2000.
- 2 As many people travelled by train as by car in the Netherlands in 1975.
- 3 Fewer people travelled by train than by bicycle in the Netherlands in 2000.
- 4 In 2000, people in the Netherlands were making most of their journeys by car.
- 5 A larger percentage of people bought new cars in 2000 than in 1975.
- 6 We can see from this information that travelling by train and by bicycle was far less common in 2000 than in 1975.

**Test Tip** Your answer must **accurately** describe the information presented in the visual. Don't draw conclusions that are not supported by the information you are given.

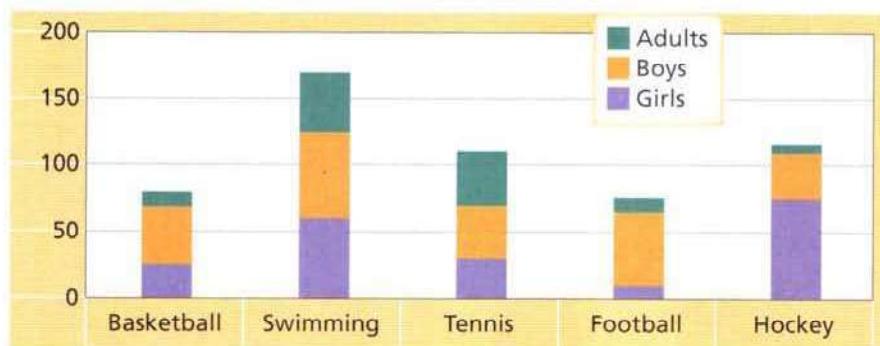
## Writing skills

## 2 More complex charts

The visual information you are given in Writing Task 1 often asks you to compare or contrast different information. One way of allowing you to compare information is through a bar chart.

- 2.1** Study the bar chart below. Notice that you have to estimate some of the numbers. Answer the questions by choosing the best answer, A, B or C.

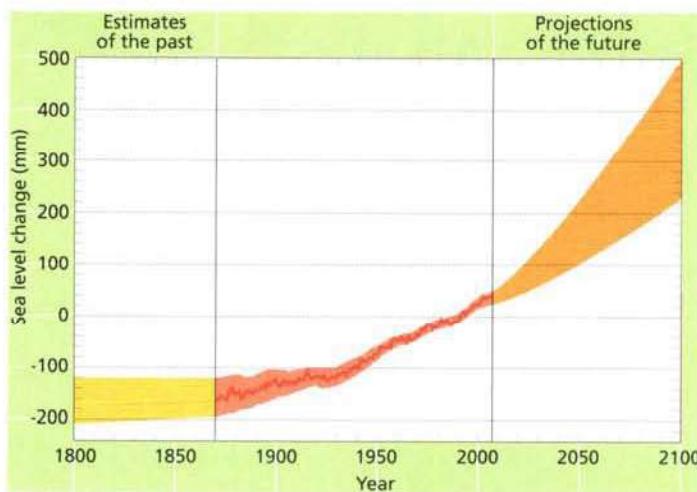
One hundred adults, boys and girls in Manchester, England were asked to name the sports they participated in. The results were recorded in the following stacked bar chart.



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- 1 Approximately how many adults play basketball?  
**A** 80                   **B** 25                   **C** 10
- 2 How many boys enjoy swimming?  
**A** about 40           **B** about 60           **C** about 170
- 3 Which sport is enjoyed by the same number of adults as girls?  
**A** basketball           **B** tennis                   **C** football
- 4 Which group seems to participate in the most sport overall?  
**A** adults               **B** boys                   **C** girls

- 2.2** Some charts are used to show predictions of the future. Study the graph below and decide what the information is telling you.



Using the passive voice helps to show you are **describing** the visual information, rather than giving your own ideas. To describe future predictions, we often use the passive form of the verbs *estimate*, *predict*, and *forecast*. These sentences often start with *It*.

### 2.3 Rewrite these sentences, describing the graph in 2.2.

- 1 I predict that sea levels will continue to rise.  
It is predicted that \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 I estimate that sea levels will have increased by 200mm by the year 2050.  
It \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 I forecast that sea levels will rise more rapidly between 2050 and 2100.  
Sea levels \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 I estimate that by 2100, sea levels will be 500 mm higher than they are at present.  
By 2100, sea levels \_\_\_\_\_



**Test Tip** Each time you come across any form of graph, chart or table, study it carefully and practise picking out the major changes that the figure shows. Imagine that you are explaining to someone else what you have noticed from the graph.

## 3 Improving your Task Achievement score

When the examiner assesses your writing, one of the criteria they will use is called **Task Achievement**. Look at the wording of this Writing Task 1 question.

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

*Write at least 150 words.*

This means that, to achieve a good score for Task Achievement, you need to

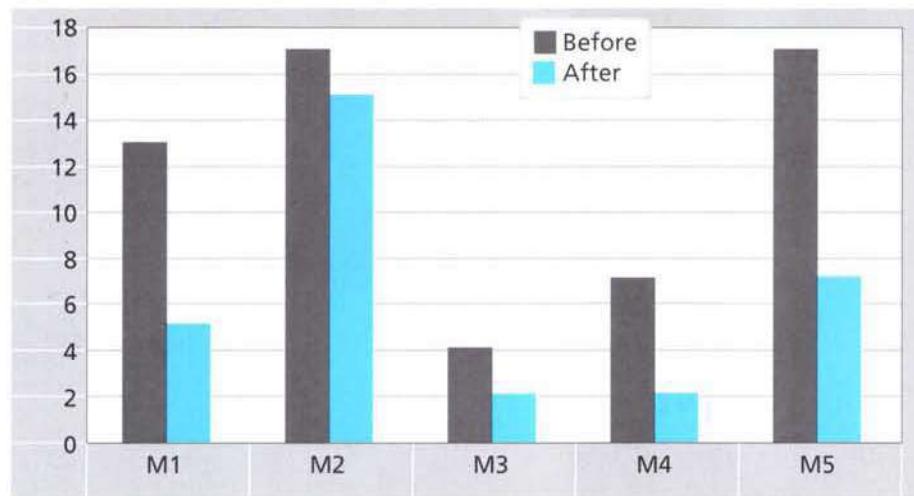
- 1 give an overview of the main information in the graph (summarise the information).
- 2 describe **all** the most relevant and significant information (select and report the main features).
- 3 point out the key differences and similarities in the data (make comparisons where relevant).
- 4 only include information that is represented in the data.
- 5 produce an answer that is at least 150 words.

## Writing skills

It is **very important** to give a one-sentence overview or summary of the **main trends** in the chart or graph. **You will not achieve a good Task Achievement score if your answer does not include an overview sentence.**

- 3.1** The bar chart below shows the reduction in traffic accidents in Bridgewater following the introduction of extra lanes on busy roads. Look at the chart and try to identify the main trend(s).

**Accident reductions per kilometre in Bridgewater following the introduction of extra lanes on busy motorways**



- 3.2** Which of the following sentences is an accurate overview sentence of the bar chart?  
(You must summarise the main trend(s).)
- A** There were mixed results following the introduction of the new traffic system in Bridgewater.  
**B** On some roads the extra lanes were more popular than on others.  
**C** The roads with the largest amount of traffic are the M1 and M5.  
**D** In every case, adding an extra lane on main roads had a positive effect on traffic incidents.  
**E** All cities should incorporate this system on their main roads.



For Writing Task 1, you need to write 150 words describing and summarising the **main features**. The visual information may contain minor details that should not be included. For example:

**Main feature:** Extra lanes were introduced to five main roads.

**Minor detail:** Before the new lane was introduced, almost eight cars had accidents on the M4 per kilometre per year.

### 3.3 Look at sentences 1–6 and decide if the information is

- A a main feature (it should be included)
- B a minor detail (it can be left out)

- 1 The M2 and the M3 showed the smallest reduction in accidents.
- 2 Approximately four accidents per kilometre occurred on the M3 prior to the peak lane being introduced.
- 3 About 17 accidents per kilometre occurred each year on the M2 following the introduction of extra lanes on busy roads.
- 4 The greatest reduction in accident numbers occurred on the M1, the M4 and the M5.
- 5 The introduction of the new system cut the number of accidents occurring on the M1 and the M5 by half.
- 6 Each year, the greatest number of accidents occur on the M1, the M2 and the M5.

### 3.4 Look again at the bar chart in 2.1 and read the model answer below. Check the Task Achievement of the model answer.

- 1 Find a sentence that gives an overview of the main information.
- 2 Find four examples of the **main features** of the data that have been selected and reported.
- 3 Check the word count.

The chart shows the responses of a group consisting of 100 boys, 100 girls and 100 adults in Manchester, England, when asked whether they participated in four sports: basketball, swimming, tennis and football. From their responses, it is clear that swimming is the most popular sport among all groups, and that from these three groups, boys participated in the most sports. In fact, for three out of the four sports, boys were the major participants. The only sport not enjoyed by the boys surveyed was hockey, a sport that the vast majority of the girls who were interviewed participated in. Other sports enjoyed by girls were tennis and basketball. However, only a very small number, approximately 10 of the 100, participated in football. We can conclude from this that girls in Manchester enjoy hockey a lot and that they don't particularly like football.

### 3.5 Improve the Task Achievement score of the model answer.

- 1 Find one piece of information that should be deleted.
- 2 Decide what details are missing.
- 3 Complete the answer so that there are 150 words.



#### Test Tip

You will lose marks for Task Achievement if you

- leave out data that is important.
- speculate on reasons for the data.
- add information not included in the data.
- write less than 150 words.

**Don't** do these things.

# Writing skills

## 2 Academic Writing Task 1 – Comparing and contrasting graphs and tables

In this unit you will practise:

- avoiding repetition
- comparing and contrasting data
- describing changes in numbers
- grammatical range and accuracy
- describing numbers and figures accurately

### 1 Avoiding repetition

As well as Task Achievement, another criterion the examiner will use is called **Lexical Resource**. This assesses the accuracy and range of the vocabulary you use. To display a wide range of vocabulary, you must make sure not to simply repeat your own words or the words from the question.

**1.1** A good way to avoid repetition is to use synonyms. Which words A–F could be used to replace the underlined words in sentences 1–6?

- 1 There was a sharp decrease in sales between 2007 and 2010
  - 2 The figures fell steadily over the next 10 years.
  - 3 It is predicted that the numbers will begin to increase from 2025.
  - 4 It is predicted that the numbers will remain the same for the next ten years.
  - 5 The charts show how many people travelled by train in 1950 and 2000.
  - 6 According to the data in the table, 2005 was the most successful year.
- A stay  
B indicate  
C information  
D dropped  
E rise  
F reduction

You need to write an introductory statement for your description. For this, it is particularly important to use your own words instead of copying words and phrases directly from the question. You can do this by

- using a synonym of the words in the question.
- changing the form of a word (e.g. changing a verb into a noun).

**1.2** Look at these extracts from Writing Task 1 questions, and candidates' introductory statements. Replace the underlined words in the candidates' answers with a suitable phrase from the box to improve the range of vocabulary.

- |   |
|---|
| A <i>how many</i>                             |
| B <i>a group of people of a range of ages</i> |
| C <i>the countries they come from</i>         |
| D <i>the number of vehicles on the road</i>   |
| E <i>have taken courses at</i>                |
| F <i>different sports preferred by</i>        |
| G <i>how much people spent</i>                |

- 1 The graph shows traffic growth in the Netherlands between 1960 and 2010.

*The graph indicates the changes in traffic in the Netherlands from 1960 to 2010.*

- 2 The bar chart shows the sporting preferences of 100 adults, boys and girls in Manchester.

*The bar chart tells us the sporting preferences of 100 adults, boys and girls in Manchester.*

- 3 The graphs show the number of students that have attended the college since 1980 and their different nationalities.

*From the graphs, we can see the number of students that have attended the college since 1980 as well as their different nationalities.*

- 4 The two pie charts show the average household expenditure in the US in 1900 and in 2000.

*The pie charts reveal the average household expenditure in the US in 1900 and 2000.*

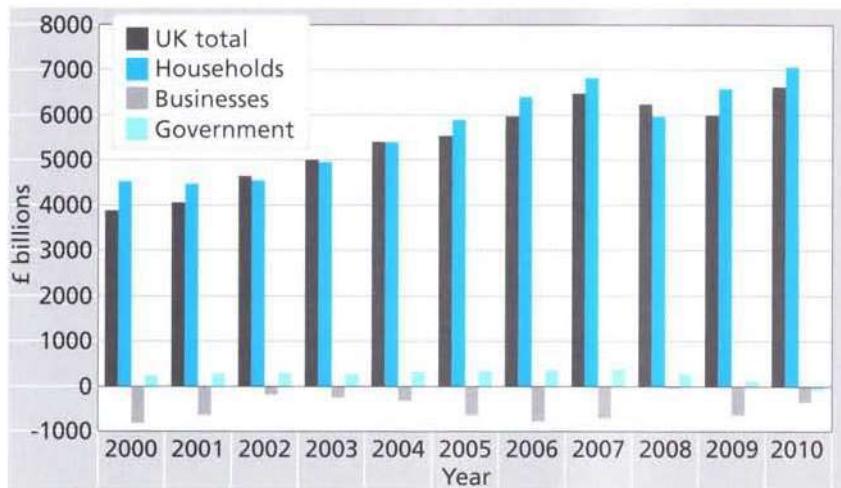
**1.3** Look at the candidates' statements again. Which other examples of paraphrase can you find?

## 2 Comparing and contrasting data

When you are describing a chart or graph, you are actually describing the patterns in the data. Before you begin to write, spend one or two minutes noticing the different features of the visual information.

### 2.1 Look at this Writing Task and then answer the questions.

The bar chart below shows the net worth of the UK from 2000 to 2010 according to three different sectors.



- What do the figures on the left measure?
- Why does the number 1,000 appear twice?
- Which set of figures shows what is happening in the country as a whole?

To help identify the patterns, you need to look for the

- peaks (high points) and troughs (low points)
- periods when the figures remain steady (show little or no change)
- periods when the figures fluctuate (show a lot of changes)

You also need to notice which different figures you can compare (show that they are similar) and contrast (show that they are different)

### 2.2 Look at the patterns in the data and answer these questions.

- Over which span of time did the UK government's wealth remain steady?
- Over which period did its wealth decline?
- In which three separate years did business wealth show a marked improvement?
- In which two years was the total wealth of the UK worth more than household wealth?
- Which three sets of data generally followed the same pattern?
- Which sector fluctuated the most between 2000 and 2010?



**Test Tip** Remember that, to achieve a high score for Writing Task 1, you need to **select and report on the main features and make comparisons where relevant**.

Usually, changes occur over time. So, to describe these changes accurately, you must use the appropriate tense.

**2.3** Complete the sentences with the most appropriate tense of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 The figures for UK households \_\_\_\_\_ (remain) fairly steady between 2000 and 2002 then \_\_\_\_\_ (begin; increase). By 2007, UK household wealth \_\_\_\_\_ (rise) from £4,500 billion to just under £7000 billion.
- 2 Between 2000 and 2007, both the government and household wealth \_\_\_\_\_ (show) positive figures that gradually (increase) over time.
- 3 While both the household and government net wealth (drop) significantly in 2008, the government's net worth \_\_\_\_\_ (fall) so much that it actually (go) into negative figures in 2010.
- 4 Between 2000 and 2010, the total net worth of the UK (follow) a similar pattern to that of the households and the government.
- 5 Although the net worth of businesses in the country (improve) from 2000 to 2002, this trend (not last) long and \_\_\_\_\_ (begin; worsen) again only a year later.
- 6 From 2005 to 2007, although the rest of the country (experience) continued growth, the wealth of businesses \_\_\_\_\_ (return) to the levels of 2000.
- 7 The data for the business community \_\_\_\_\_ (reveal) the opposite trend to that of the rest of the country. At the same time that the wealth of households and the government (grow), the wealth of businesses (decline).

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**2.4** Look at the sentences in 2.3 again. Which sentences are

- A describing a pattern or trend in one sector?
- B pointing out the similarities in data for two or more sectors?
- C contrasting data from two or more sectors?

**2.5** Study the language used in the sentences in 2.3 and make a note of any new vocabulary.

### 3 Grammatical Accuracy – describing numbers and figures accurately

Another criterion the examiner will use to assess your writing is **Grammatical Range and Accuracy**.

After your introductory sentence and your overview sentence, you need to select relevant data to report on. To do this, you need to be able to accurately describe numbers and figures.

- 3.1** Read this extract from a description of the bar chart in 2.1 and the underlined information.

*The chart shows that the maximum net worth of all UK households reached a little over £7000 billion. In six of the ten years represented in the chart, UK households were worth approximately 5% to 10% more than the UK total. For just under a third of this period, in the years 2002 to 2004, the UK total was equal to or greater than the total worth of UK households.*

- 1 Which information is written as numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.)?
- 2 Which information is written in words?

- 3.2**  Replace the relevant numerals in the following sentences with the correct word from the box.

three and a half billion	a quarter	half
a third	one million dollars	

- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the people who attended in 1961 had never attended a concert before.
- 2 They reduced the budget by \$1m 40 years later.
- 3 60% of students report using the library in term time only and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of those use the library at night.
- 4 The population rose by 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  billion in the next 15 years.
- 5 Over 15 million planes landed at the airport in the last seven months; this is an increase of  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

A common problem for candidates is in deciding whether or not a noun or a number should have a final 's'.

### 3.3

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

- 1 There were approximately three hundred \_\_\_\_\_ on the roads in 1970. (thousand; car)
- 2 Current figures show that this has now risen to over twelve \_\_\_\_\_. (million)
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ of people travel by plane every year. (million)
- 4 According to the chart, four \_\_\_\_\_ were manufactured in the factory last month. (hundred; bed)
- 5 Approximately 40% of all \_\_\_\_\_ admitted to working through the night before exams. (student)

Another common mistake that candidates make when describing numbers is missing out the preposition or using the wrong one.

### 3.4

Choose the correct preposition from the box to complete the sentences below. You may use some prepositions more than once.

in	of	to	for	from
----	----	----	-----	------

- 1 The increase \_\_\_\_\_ car use was accompanied by a decline in the use of public transport.
- 2 The table shows the number \_\_\_\_\_ students enrolled at the school between 1960 and 1990.
- 3 Approximately 70% \_\_\_\_\_ women have experienced this as compared to only 30% \_\_\_\_\_. men.
- 4 The figures \_\_\_\_\_ train and bicycle use reveal a steady drop in these types of transport.
- 5 The figures had increased \_\_\_\_\_ 35% \_\_\_\_\_ over 60% within five years.



**Study Tip** When you are practising this type of writing, say your answer aloud to help you decide whether your language is too repetitive. Do your sentences sound very similar? Think about the sentence structures you have used, as well as the vocabulary.

The **coherence** (how easy your writing is to understand) and **cohesion** (how the ideas in your answer are connected together) of your answer are also assessed in Writing Task 1. You need to take the time to organise your ideas into paragraphs. You can practise this in Units 3, 4 and 6.



**Test Tip** Make sure that you leave time at the end to check your writing. You need to make sure that your facts and your language are both accurate.

# Writing skills

## 3 Academic Writing Task 1 – Describing diagrams

In this unit you will practise:

- understanding a diagram
- describing a process
- improving coherence and cohesion
- understanding Lexical Resource
- being accurate

### 1 Understanding a diagram

Another form of visual information is a diagram. Again, you need to spend a little time studying and understanding the diagram before you begin to write. Remember, you need to include all of the most relevant information.

#### 1.1 Look at the diagram below for one minute.

How to make recycled paper from old newspapers.



**Test Tip** Try drawing your own diagram of an everyday machine in your home (e.g. a washing machine). Divide the process up into different stages and describe it.

## 1.2

Match the verbs to parts 1–9 in the diagram. You may use more than one verb for each image.

lift	pour	leave	drain	add	put	tear
mix	press	soak	dry	place	slide	beat

There may be some labels included in the diagram. These are usually the names of different objects that you are not expected to know. You should use these in your description.

## 1.3

Study the diagram again and complete these sentences.

- You need old newspapers, a \_\_\_\_\_ to hold the mixture and a \_\_\_\_\_ containing 250 ml of water.
- An \_\_\_\_\_ is used to form the mixture into a pulp.
- The pulp is poured into a \_\_\_\_\_.
- Some \_\_\_\_\_ is used to lift the pulp out of the water.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is used to flatten the pulp and press the water out.

### Test Tip

Remember, you have only 20 minutes to complete Writing Task 1, so you need to identify the most important information in only one or two minutes. To help plan your answer, write the different verbs you will use to describe each stage on the diagram itself. This will help to make sure you don't miss out any important steps in your description.

## 2 Describing a process – coherence and cohesion

Your Writing Task answer will be assessed based on its **coherence** (is it easy to understand?) and its **cohesion** (are the ideas connected well?). For every Writing Task answer, your ideas must be organised in a logical way and be connected together. Your answer must not be a list of individual sentences.

## 2.1

Complete sentences 1–9 with endings A–I.

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 The diagram explains how to    | 6 Then, use a piece of mesh, to carefully |
| 2 First,                         | 7 Next, open up an old newspaper and      |
| 3 Then, add 250 ml of water and  | 8 Then, use a rolling pin to              |
| 4 Next, using an electric mixer, | 9 Finally,                                |
| 5 When it is ready,              |   |

- A place the pulp mixture inside.
- B beat the mixture for about 45 seconds until it forms a pulp.
- C leave your new paper to dry in a warm place for at least 24 hours.
- D make recycled paper from old newspapers.
- E tear some newspaper into small pieces and put them in a bowl.
- F lift the pulp mixture out of the tray, allowing the water to drain.
- G press the paper down and force out any excess water.
- H leave the paper to soak for up to an hour.
- I pour the pulp into a shallow tray and add a further 100 ml of water. Mix it together by hand.

## Writing skills

To describe a process, we usually use the passive voice.

### Active voice

*First, tear some newspaper into small pieces.*

### Passive voice

*First, some newspaper is torn into small pieces.*

- 2.2** Now complete the description below by changing the sentences in 2.1 to the passive voice.

The diagram explains how recycled paper is made from old newspapers. First, some newspaper is torn into small pieces and put into a bowl. Then,

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2.3** Look at the complete description in the Answer Key. The beginning of each sentence helps to organise the information and link it together. Complete the list of words/phrases below that help do this.

*First, ... Then, ...*

## 3 Lexical Resource – being accurate

### Common spelling mistakes

- 3.1** Accuracy in vocabulary includes using the correct spelling. The sentences below each contain one spelling mistake. Find the mistakes and correct them.

- 1 The goverment increased spending in 1988 and again in 1998.
- 2 The chart shows the perscentage of students who have access to the internet in their home.
- 3 From the pie charts, we can see the diffrent sports enjoyed by each age group.
- 4 These figures remained steady untill 1990, when they rose steeply.
- 5 The charts show the energy use of four different contries over a 50-year period.
- 6 The highest rise occurred betwen 1970 and 1990.
- 7 This figure had dicreased by 50% by the end of this decade.
- 8 While the amount of money spent on education remained the same, the budget for transport incresed considerably over this time.



**Test Tip** Remember, your answer for Writing Task 1 will be marked against specific criteria. One of these is Lexical Resource. To get a good score, you need to use a wide range of vocabulary (not repeating the same common words) and use vocabulary accurately (without mistakes).

## Using the wrong noun

**3.2** Accuracy in vocabulary also involves using the most appropriate words. Improve the accuracy of the sentences below by replacing the underlined words with one of the nouns from the box.

percentage	number	means	method
amount	factors	figures	

- 1 The number of traffic on the road continues to increase.
- 2 The diagram shows the way for making canned food.
- 3 The amount of children who do not have access to a computer at home is higher in Newtown than in Westbridge.
- 4 The chart shows figures for four different ways of transport in The Netherlands.
- 5 Another significant figure is the percent of the budget that the school spent on recruiting staff.
- 6 The chart clearly shows the reasons that led to the current energy problems.

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## Using the wrong form

**3.3** Another accuracy problem occurs when you choose the right word but use it in the wrong form. Complete these sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

- 1 The \_\_\_\_\_ between the two is only 9%. (different)
- 2 This involved a great deal of hard \_\_\_\_\_. (work)
- 3 The chart shows several of the areas we tend to take for granted in our \_\_\_\_\_. (live)
- 4 In the older group, there was a dramatic \_\_\_\_\_ in 2000. (increase)
- 5 The graph shows that the \_\_\_\_\_ rate of women increased far more than that of men. (attend)
- 6 There was a \_\_\_\_\_ decrease from 2005 to 2010, but overall it remained the same. (slight)
- 7 The figures show how many people in the area make use of the local \_\_\_\_\_ centre. (sport)
- 8 We often go on \_\_\_\_\_ trips to museums and art galleries. (education)

# Writing skills

## 4 Academic Writing Task 1 – Describing maps

In this unit you will practise:

- describing a map
- describing changes in a place
- being accurate

### 1 Describing a map

**1.1** Look at the following Writing Task 1. Then complete the list of changes below.

*The following maps show the changes that have taken place in the centre of a town since 1700.*

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



**Test Tip** Work out how much space 150 of your words take on a page. This can save you having to count. Make sure your handwriting is neat and legible.

Town centre, 1700



Town centre today



Write at least 150 words

changes:

- the hotel *has been expanded / extended.*
- Steggile Farm
- the roads
- the shops
- the houses
- Goode Farm
- the house in St Peter's Lane
- the stables

### 1.2 Complete the sentences with the correct feature.

- 1 The \_\_\_\_\_, which is right in the centre of the town, has not changed in 300 years.
- 2 According to the 1700s map, there was a \_\_\_\_\_ in the bottom right-hand corner.
- 3 Another feature that has remained the same is the \_\_\_\_\_, located in the centre, to the right of the market square.
- 4 The row of \_\_\_\_\_ that can be seen in the bottom centre of both maps, has changed little over the years.

### 1.3 Complete the sentences with the correct location.

- 1 Steggie Farm, which can be seen \_\_\_\_\_ of the 1700s map, is no longer there.
- 2 To \_\_\_\_\_ the market square is the hotel, which has changed considerably over the years.
- 3 In the \_\_\_\_\_ both maps, there is a bridge.
- 4 In the 1700s, there were stables located \_\_\_\_\_ the church.

## 2 Describing changes in a place

### 2.1 Match the verbs in the box to definitions 1–10.

add	remove	modernise	extend	replace
reconstruct	expand	improve	renovate	
reduce	develop			

- 1 make something bigger: \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 make something new again: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 make something modern: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 take something away and put something else in its place: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 make something better: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 make something smaller: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 build several buildings in an area where there was nothing: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 put in something totally new: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 take something away: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 build something again: \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing skills

### 2.2 Complete these sentences with the correct form of verbs from 2.1.

- 1 Goode Farm has now been \_\_\_\_\_ with a car park.
- 2 The hotel has been \_\_\_\_\_, and is now almost twice the size it was in 1700.
- 3 Though many of their names have remained the same, all of the roads \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 The traffic lights, roundabout and zebra crossing, which were not needed in 1700, \_\_\_\_\_ now \_\_\_\_\_, and the road surfaces \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 The stables \_\_\_\_\_ and replaced with a block of flats.



**Test Tip** Get an old map of your own town centre and write about some of the changes that have happened.

### 3 Grammatical Accuracy

Your answer for Writing Task 1 will be marked against specific criteria. One of these is Grammatical Accuracy. To obtain a good score, you need to produce writing that is grammatically accurate.

#### 3.1 Correct the 10 mistakes underlined in the answer below.

The two maps 1 allows us to see the changes in one small town over a 300-year period. In the 1700s, the town was relatively small and 2 consists of a few farms and houses gathered around a central market place and church. Transport 3 restricted to horses at that time so the roads were very basic. Having said that, the roads were clearly marked and the river had a bridge running across it.

In the present-day town, a great deal 4 changing. Perhaps the most noticeable changes are those relating to transportation. Our modern-day needs are very different and so the roads 5 are improving and traffic lights, a roundabout and a zebra crossing 6 been adding, as well as an extra road. Increased traffic means that a car park 7 now replaced Goode farm and the fields that 8 are locate at the top of the 1700 map. Housing is another area where many changes 9 are made. While in 1700 there were few houses, now there are rows of houses and a block of flats instead of the stables. A further development is the supermarket and the hotel, which 10 is extending.

It is important to use paragraphs in your Writing Task 1 answer. Paragraphs show that your answer is well organised.

#### 3.2 Look at the answer in 3.1 again and explain how it is organised.



**Study Tip** Practise writing with a timer set for 15 minutes so that you get a good feel for how long this is.

# Writing skills

## 1 Understanding the task

For General Training Writing Task 1, you will be asked to write a letter. The letter must be written in the correct style:

- informal (if you are writing to family or friends)
- semi-formal (if you are writing to a work colleague you know well)
- formal (if you are writing to a business or a local newspaper)

### 1.1 Complete the table with these phrases, according to which part of a letter they belong to and what style they are.

- 1 Hi Mum.
- 2 I look forward to your reply
- 3 Dear Mike
- 4 Lots of love
- 5 I'm afraid I won't be able to attend the meeting next week.
- 6 Thanks for the parcel, it just arrived!
- 7 Yours sincerely
- 8 Dear Sir or Madam
- 9 Kind regards
- 10 I'm writing in response to your advertisement.
- 11 I can't wait to see you next week.
- 12 I'm looking forward to getting back to work.



**Test Tip** In the General Training Writing Test, you must manage your time well. Writing Task 2 is worth twice as many points as Writing Task 1, so you must only spend 20 minutes on Writing Task 1. Take a reliable watch into the exam with you. You won't be allowed to take your mobile phone into the exam room.

	informal	semi-formal	formal
<b>greeting</b>			
<b>opening statement</b>			
<b>closing statement</b>			
<b>ending</b>			

## Writing skills

In your letter, you might be asked to

- A request information.
- B give personal or factual information.
- C explain a problem or situation.
- D explain wants or needs / make a request.
- E complain about a service.
- F make a suggestion or recommend something.

### 1.2 Match phrases 1–6 to ideas A–F.

- 1 I think it would be better if you opened at the weekend as well.
- 2 Could you please send me a brochure and an application form?
- 3 Because I'm a student, I need a quiet place to study at night.
- 4 I'm very unhappy about the dinner we ate in your restaurant last night.
- 5 I finished high school last year and I am currently taking a computer course.
- 6 I'm unable to go to the meeting myself because I have to look after my son.

### 1.3 Look at this General Training Writing Task 1 question.

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

This part explains the situation.

This tells you how to begin.

You rent a four-bedroom house, which you share with two other students. However, there are several problems with this house that need fixing. You also find it expensive and would like to find another student to share the spare bedroom.

Write a letter to the estate agency. In the letter

- explain your situation
- describe the problems with the house
- say what you would like to happen

The bullet points tell you what to write about.

Write at least 150 words. You do NOT need to write any addresses. Begin your letter as follows: *Dear Sir or Madam,*

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### 1.4 Look again at the situation described in the question.

- 1 Do you think this situation is informal, semi-formal or formal?
- 2 Can you change these details and write about your own personal situation?
- 3 Should you write your own address at the top of your letter?

## 2 Improving your score

Your answer will be assessed based on the following criteria.

- **Task Achievement** Does your letter answer all the parts of the question? Are all your ideas relevant?
- **Coherence and Cohesion** Are your ideas well organised, clear and well connected?
- **Lexical Resource** Have you avoided repeating the same words and copying words from the question?
- **Grammatical Range and Accuracy** Have you made few grammatical mistakes and shown a range of grammatical structures?

The information in the exam task will tell you what to write about. To achieve a good Task Achievement score, include all of these points in your letter and only include relevant ideas. To improve your score for Coherence and Cohesion, use the information in the exam task to help plan and organise your ideas.

**2.1** Look at the suggested plan below for a letter to answer the question in 1.3. Think about what you would write for parts 2–6.

1 Greeting	Dear Sir or Madam,
2 Opening statements (introduce yourself, say why you are writing)	
3 Explain the situation	
4 Describe the problems with the house	
5 Say what you would like to happen	
6 Closing statements (signal the end of the letter)	
7 End the letter	

## Writing skills

### 2.2 Look at a candidate's notes below for their letter.

- 1 Are all the ideas relevant to this question?
  - 2 Match the relevant ideas (A–F) with parts 2–6 of the plan.  
N.B. You may not be able to fill in each part.
- A The upstairs shower seems to be leaking into the kitchen below and this is dangerous.  
B We would be grateful if you could get the problems fixed as soon as possible.  
C We're also worried as there is no front gate, which makes the house less secure.  
D We have exams soon and my computer is broken.  
E I look forward to hearing from you very soon.  
F My friends and I rent one of your properties and I am writing to inform you of some problems that we are having.

### 2.3 Which two parts of the plan still need ideas?

To achieve a good score for Lexical Resource, you need to avoid copying words from the question.

### 2.4 Look at the following explanation of the situation. Why do you think it would receive a low mark?

We rent a four-bedroom house. However, there are several problems with the house that need fixing and we also find it expensive.

### 2.5 Help to improve the explanation below by filling in the blanks. Then add the paragraph into the correct part of the plan on the previous page.

The house we are 1 \_\_\_\_\_ four bedrooms and there are three of us sharing it. Our rent was recently increased and, as we are all students, it is a little difficult for us to 2 \_\_\_\_\_. It's a very nice house that suits us perfectly but at the moment some 3 \_\_\_\_\_ are needed.

### 2.6 What extra details does this second explanation include?

### 2.7 Which ideas (A–C) would help to complete the plan?

- A I would like to ask permission to invite my friends to the house.
- B Finally, we would like to ask if it is possible to invite a friend of ours to share the rent and occupy the spare bedroom.
- C To summarise, there are many problems with the house and we are unhappy with your service.

To finish off a formal letter, we use

- *Yours sincerely* – if you know the name of the person you are writing to.
- *Yours faithfully* – if you do not know the name of the person.

### 2.8 Which ending is the most appropriate for this letter?

- A Best wishes      B Lots of love      C Yours faithfully



**Study Tip** Study the Academic Writing sections of this book for extra help with improving coherence, cohesion and accuracy.

### 3 Checking and correcting

Your writing will be assessed for grammatical and lexical accuracy. This means using vocabulary correctly, not making grammatical mistakes and using the correct spelling. Below are some common mistakes.

#### Common mistakes with tenses

##### 3.1 Correct the underlined mistakes.

- 1 I hope that the above information would be helpful to you.
- 2 I will be grateful if you could think about the situation.
- 3 However, there were a few things I have to comment on.
- 4 On the bus, I spend the entire journey trying to make myself warm with the help of my shawl.
- 5 Secondly, I want to describe the kind of area I like to move to.
- 6 I am look forward to hear from you.
- 7 My uncle is going away on holiday, so, he need someone to help run his business.
- 8 I hope that help you with the identification of my parcel.
- 9 I writing you this letter regarding doing a computer course.



**Test Tip** Leave at least three minutes at the end to check your writing. Check your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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**Test Tip** To help with your tenses when you are writing, remember that you are writing in the present about something that

- **happened** in the past.
- **has happened** recently.
- **is true now** or **is happening now**.
- **will happen** in the future.
- **you would like to** happen in the future.

#### Common mistakes with prepositions

##### 3.2 Complete these sentences with the correct preposition. You may use any preposition more than once.

in	of	on	at	with	about	to	for
----	----	----	----	------	-------	----	-----

- 1 The reason that I didn't take part is that I had an important examination in Marketing the following day.
- 2 On the night last Sunday, I was playing games on the computer with my classmate.
- 3 Yesterday, I noticed an advertisement in the newspaper.
- 4 The main reason for my trip is to meet my nephews who are living there.
- 5 I am looking forward to your reply and for having more details of this project.
- 6 You can contact me at my phone at home at 5467 4539.
- 7 I can support the project in a lot of ways.
- 8 I have lots of experience in cooking and cleaning.
- 9 I am really interested in this job and also have the ability to do this job very well.

## Writing skills

### Common spelling mistakes

#### 3.3 Find and correct the common spelling mistakes.

- 1 I am writing to you because I'd like to attend the computer course at your college.
- 2 I'm studying biology and I saw the advertisement at the university.
- 3 I think this is good for our sociaty.
- 4 Is that course avaible part time?
- 5 Finally, the liberry needs more workers to help out at the weekend.
- 6 She has a degree in bussiness and marketing.
- 7 This restaurant is situated at the centre of the city and is therefore accessible from any point in the city.
- 8 I'm going to change my job soon, and it's neccessary for me to improve my computer skills.
- 9 Yours sincerely,



**Study Tip** If you have trouble spotting these spelling mistakes, perhaps they are mistakes you make yourself! Make a note of any words you often spell incorrectly and study them often. Writing the words out many times can help you to learn the spelling.

### Common punctuation mistakes

#### 3.4 Find and correct the common punctuation mistakes.

- 1 I was on my way to my office when i noticed your advertisement on a billboard.
- 2 However; there is one certain thing which I see as a fault.
- 3 Yours Sincerely,
- 4 However, I would like to ask you about the party?
- 5 Please dont take a taxi, just wait for me.
- 6 Im available every Monday and Tuesday and every other weekend.
- 7 Dear Sir:

# Writing skills

## 6 Writing Task 2 – Getting ready to write

In this unit you will practise:

- understanding the task
- planning and organising your ideas
- improving your Task Response score
- writing an introduction

### 1 Understanding the task

Writing Task 2 consists of

- one or two statements on a topic OR a direct quotation giving someone's opinion on a topic
- a specific task or question for you to answer
- the types of idea you need to include in your answer.

**1.1** The words and phrases 1–8 are often used in Writing Task 2.

Match them with their correct meanings A–H.

- |                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 to what extent | A connected to the topic          |
| 2 positive trend | B to give a summary of            |
| 3 a factor       | C a means of achieving something  |
| 4 an approach    | D to consider the different sides |
| 5 to regard      | E how far or how much             |
| 6 to outline     | F to view or judge                |
| 7 to discuss     | G a change for the better         |
| 8 relevant       | H an element or condition         |

**1.2** Read statements 1–6 carefully and make sure that you understand them. Then match the statements to questions A–E.

- 1 Children have to be educated, but they also have to be allowed to learn things for themselves.
- 2 'Advertisements spoil our enjoyment of today's entertainment.' 'I think the adverts are often more enjoyable than the programmes they interrupt.'
- 3 The world would be a happier place if we all enjoyed our work.
- 4 Computers allow us to stay connected with each other. However, they also encourage people not to go out and socialise.
- 5 Some countries reduce inner-city traffic by increasing public transport. Others impose a tax on people who drive in the city.
- 6 Nowadays, more people are travelling to remote places, spreading their own language and culture as a result.

#### Questions

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each system?
- Discuss both statements and give your own opinion.
- To what extent do you think this is a positive trend?
- How realistic do you think this is?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view?

## 2 Planning and organising your ideas

Before you begin to write, it's important to make a plan. If you don't do this, your ideas will be disorganised and you will lose marks.

### Step 1: decide on your own position or attitude

#### 2.1 Look at the statements from 1.2 again.

- 1 For statements 1, 3 and 6, decide how much you agree.
- 2 For the statements in 2, 4 and 5, decide which one you agree with.
- 3 For each of the statements in 1.2, explain why you agree or disagree. Then give your own opinion on the topic.

#### 2.2 Study the following Writing Task 2 question.

*The internet allows us to stay connected with each other no matter where we are. On the other hand, it also isolates us and encourages people not to socialise.*

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?*

*Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.*

The final part of the question is very important. It tells you what you must include in your answer.

##### You must include

- your own opinion about the statements.
- the reasons for your opinion.

##### You can include

- examples from your own personal experience. BUT these must be relevant to the question.

#### 2.3 Look at the question in 2.2 again.

- 1 Decide on your own point of view.
- 2 Think about your own personal experience of this topic. Make notes.

##### My own opinions and experience



**Test Tip** The score you get for Writing Task 2 is **two thirds** of your total writing score, so it is very important that you spend a full 40 minutes on this part of the IELTS Writing paper. You are given more time than for Writing Task 1 because you need to write 250 words, and also because you have to use **your own ideas**. Spend at least four or five minutes planning your ideas before you start writing.

## Step 2: note down any ideas about the topic

The examiner will mark your Writing Task 2 based on specific criteria. One of these is **Task Response**. To achieve a good Task Response score, you must

- explain your own opinions on the topic
- support your opinions (e.g. with personal examples or your knowledge of the world)
- include **only relevant** ideas
- write 250 words.

**2.4** You will lose marks if you include ideas that are not relevant to the question. Look at these ideas that a candidate noted to answer the question in 2.2. Cross out **four** ideas that are not relevant to the task and should not be included.

- 1 Instant communication (e.g. emails/text messages) means that it is difficult to escape from work.
- 2 The internet makes it easier to do your homework.
- 3 In my company, computers have replaced many staff and have caused more unemployment.
- 4 A friend of mine uses a social-networking site a great deal but we rarely see her.
- 5 Virtual friends made on the internet cannot be compared to our actual friends and family.
- 6 I learned to type using a computer program, these programs make it easy to understand computers and make learning fun.
- 7 My cousin travelled for a year but kept in touch with his family every day.
- 8 With more and more technological advances, our society will continue to develop faster and faster.
- 9 Through the internet, we can share memories with people who are far away.

**2.5** Check your answers, then look back at your own ideas from 2.3. Are there any you need to cross out?



**Study Tip** Articles that contain opinions can help give you ideas to use in the Writing tasks. The letters page of a newspaper usually contains people's personal opinions about different topics. Read them and decide whether you agree or disagree. Decide what your own opinion is.

### Step 3: organise your ideas into paragraphs

It is important to produce a balanced answer that looks at both sides of the question equally. It is also important to organise your ideas into separate paragraphs.

- 2.6** Decide which of the remaining ideas from 2.4 can be put together into the same paragraph. Put the ideas from 2.4 into the correct box below.

For: the internet helps us to stay connected:	Against: the internet isolates us

### Step 4: check that you have enough ideas

If you do not have enough ideas for both sides of the question, then your ideas will not be fully developed.

- 2.7** Which side of the argument do we need to add more to?

- 2.8** Which of the following ideas would be best to add?

- A The business world benefits from the immediate contact provided by the internet.
- B The internet has both advantages and disadvantages.

## 3 Getting started – writing an introduction

Once you have your ideas planned out, you can begin to write. Your answer must be clearly developed, and so it needs a clear start. The best way to start is by restating the question **in your own words**.

- 3.1** Match introductory sentences A–D below to Writing Task 2 statements 1–6 in 1.2.
- A Each year, there are more and more cars on our streets creating congestion and causing delays. There are several ways that local governments can try to solve these problems.
  - B Unless we are born into wealth, we all need to find a way to earn a living. For many, our working life takes up most of our waking hours and this can make us very unhappy indeed.
  - C As a society, we have a duty to teach our young people. However, there are some lessons that we need to learn for ourselves.
  - D Marketing involves teaching as many people as possible about a product. There is no better way to reach people than through television, popular culture and the internet.



**Test Tip** Your answer will also be marked on **coherence** (are your ideas clearly linked?). You need to make sure your ideas are organised into separate paragraphs. To help group your ideas together logically, make notes under different headings that show both sides of the discussion. These can then form the middle paragraphs of your answer.

**3.2** In this introduction for the Writing Task in 2.2, too many words have been copied from the question. Improve the introduction by replacing the underlined phrases. Use the words from the box.

keep in touch	however	anywhere in the world
obsession	stay at home	see their friends

 **Test Tip**

You will lose marks if you copy words from the question. Make sure to paraphrase the ideas.

The internet is a wonderful tool that helps us to stay connected with each other no matter where we are. On the other hand, some websites encourage us not to socialise.

Once you have restated the question, the rest of your introduction could

- 1 give your interpretation of the words or ideas used in the question
- 2 explain what you intend to write about
- 3 give a brief reaction to the question
- 4 summarise the question or topic through a new question

**3.3** What suggestions above (1–4) do sentences A–D relate to?

- A Does the internet really help us to develop relationships?
- B We need to consider both the benefits and the drawbacks of the internet.
- C I think the word 'tool' is important here. In my view it shows how impersonal this contact is.
- D These statements summarise my own mixed feelings towards the internet.

**3.4** Look at sentences 1–4 below and decide which would make a good final sentence for the introduction.

- 1 It seems clear that the internet brings a lot of problems.
- 2 Is the internet a positive or a negative influence on our lives?
- 3 How can we ensure that the internet does not cause widespread problems?
- 4 Let us consider the arguments for and against computers.



**Study Tip** Don't learn whole answers and expect to use them in the exam. You will receive a very low score if you do this. Candidates who receive a higher band score in writing are able to show **flexible** use of language. The more you practise writing and reading, the more flexible your writing will become.

# Writing skills

## 7 Writing Task 2 – Expressing your ideas clearly

In this unit you will practise:

- linking your ideas
- being accurate with vocabulary
- avoiding repetition
- using the correct style
- expressing a personal view
- reaching a conclusion

### 1 Linking ideas – cohesion

Cohesion means linking your ideas together clearly. Without cohesion, you will have a list of sentences, rather than a connected paragraph or essay.

**1.1** The following words and phrases are all used to connect sentences and ideas together. Put them into the correct place in the list, according to how they are used.

that is      because of      however      in spite of  
furthermore      in addition      on the other hand  
consequently      while      so      despite      such as  
as a result      whereas      for instance  
not only ... but also      although      also      in fact

- Connecting similar ideas: *similarly*,
- Connecting different ideas: *but*,
- Clarifying an idea: *in other words*,
- Giving examples: *for example*,
- Giving a reason or conclusion: *therefore*,

**1.2** Choose the correct words.

- 1 Advertisements provide vital revenue for the entertainment industry. *Consequently / Despite*, without adverts we could lose certain forms of entertainment altogether.
- 2 Nowadays, the internet has become an indispensable business tool. *Although / In fact*, we would find it very difficult to get through a working day without it.
- 3 The internet brings the world into our home. *Also / However*, we sometimes want to shut out the outside world from time to time.
- 4 Schools can give our children academic knowledge. *Whereas / Furthermore*, at school, children can learn social skills.
- 5 Many people today spend time on social networking sites. *As a result / For example*, Facebook and Twitter are both used around the world to help people stay connected.

#### Test Tip

The examiner will assess the **Coherence and Cohesion** of your answer. They will judge how your ideas are organised and how you link information. Planning before you write is the best way to make sure your ideas are organised in a logical way.

### 1.3 Which connectors in the box could also be used to link the ideas in 1.2?

In addition	On the other hand	In other words
For instance	As a result	

## 2 Lexical Resource – avoiding repetition

To achieve a high band score in the IELTS Writing paper, you need to show a wide variety of vocabulary and sentence structure.

You can avoid repeating words by

- using a synonym
- using a pronoun to refer back to an idea (*This + noun / These + plural noun*)
- using a group noun (*This/these type(s) of / kind(s) of + noun*)

For example

*Settlers introduced several new animals, such as the cat. This predator preyed on the local wildlife.*

*Settlers often introduce new crops and animals to an area. This type of activity can be disastrous.*

### Test Tip

Just like Writing Task 1, your Writing Task 2 answer will be assessed based on the lexical resources or vocabulary you use. This means that you need to avoid repeating words from the question and use a wide variety of words and phrases to discuss the topic as you can.

### 2.1 Extracts 1–5 repeat the same vocabulary. Improve them by replacing the underlined phrases with a suitable synonym from the box and the appropriate pronoun.

funding	system	natural resources	facilities
method	technology		

- 1 We depend on oil, coal and gas for the majority of our energy needs. However, oil, coal and gas will one day run out.
- 2 Remote and rural areas may initially seem like idyllic places to live but they often lack hospitals, shops and schools. Living without easy access to hospitals, shops and schools can make life very difficult indeed.
- 3 Governments sometimes try to encourage innovation by offering grants. This isn't always effective because special grants are often difficult to obtain.
- 4 Some teachers ask students to simply copy down texts from a blackboard. But copying down texts does not help students to become independent or flexible in their use of language.
- 5 In my country, cars driving through the city centre are charged a toll. Charging a toll has been a success because the traffic has decreased considerably.

## Using the correct style

The language you choose must be as accurate as possible and must suit this formal task.

### 2.2 Sentences 1–6 contain one example of incorrect style. Find the mistakes and correct them.

- 1 Children with no access to education are most likely gonna end up in manual jobs.
- 2 Two of the major problems we are facing today are global warming & increased pollution.
- 3 A lot of our modern conveniences are contributing to our unhealthy lifestyle, e.g. we often use a car instead of walking to the local shops.
- 4 Some businesses think it is OK to simply dump toxic waste and pay the necessary fine.
- 5 Kids of any age need the right type of guidance.
- 6 I find that the internet helps me a lot when I travel. I can use it to book flights, find a hotel, get maps, etc.



**Study Tip** Think about your own language when you are studying English. Make a note of important differences such as vocabulary or grammar. Noticing these will help you to avoid making the mistakes that are common for people with the same first language as you.

### 2.3 Some words are commonly confused. Circle the correct word or phrase in each sentence.

- 1 I don't think it is necessary for children to *learn / study* about ancient history.
- 2 I do think it is important for us to try to *understand / know* different cultures.
- 3 Before I travel to a new country, I always take the time to *find out about / know* the local customs and rules.
- 4 It is almost impossible to get a good office job without up-to-date computer *skills / knowledge*.
- 5 I don't think we will be able to *stop / solve* this problem in our lifetime.
- 6 I believe today's younger generation are more attracted by flexible working hours than by the thought of earning *money / wages*.
- 7 Sadly, not all *employers / employees* receive sick pay and holiday pay.
- 8 A great deal of *advertising / advertisement* is now done as we surf the internet.



**Test Tip** Writing an essay like this is a formal situation and so your language must be formal as well. Never use notes or bullet points. You will lose marks if you use abbreviations or language that is too casual.

### 3 Expressing a personal view

Remember that your Writing Task 2 answer should give your own **views on or attitude to** the topic. One way to show this is by using

- A adverbs such as *personally* or *probably*.
- B modals such as *might* or *could*.
- C phrases such as *in my view*.
- D verbs such as *appear to be* or *seem to be*.

These can also help to stress your ideas or change them from a simple fact to a personal opinion.

For example

*Travelling is dangerous.* → *Travelling can be dangerous.*

*Most people agree with me.* → *I think most people would agree with me.*

#### 3.1 Match these examples to suggestions A–D.

- 1 As far as I'm concerned, we have not done enough to address the problem.
- 2 Perhaps the current strategy will work.
- 3 People seem to spend a lot more time at work than with their families nowadays.
- 4 Following a vegetarian diet can help you save money.

#### 3.2 Underline the words or phrases in sentences 1–9 that show opinion and attitude. Then rewrite them using the words in brackets.

- 1 Perhaps this is because today's teachers are not trained as well as they used to be. (might)  
*This might be because today's teachers are not trained as well as they used to be.*
- 2 Personally, I don't think this is a good idea. (view)
- 3 I certainly wouldn't like to have to do a job I didn't enjoy. (personal)
- 4 I think this could be a bad idea. (probably)
- 5 In my view, life is much more complicated for young people nowadays. (can)
- 6 Personally, I think every situation is different. (opinion)
- 7 Nowadays, young people probably use their mobile phones for multiple tasks. (generally)
- 8 In my opinion, schools are more crowded than in the past. (seem)
- 9 My city is less crowded now and people generally enjoy walking through the streets. (appear)

## Writing skills

Try to avoid repeating '*I think*' or '*I know*' too often. The following verbs can be used instead: *realise, feel, believe, imagine, can see*.

### 3.3 Match the words in bold in sentences 1–8 with the most appropriate definition, A–C.

- A this is my strong belief
  - B this is my understanding of the situation
  - C this is a guess, I don't really know for sure
- 1 **I feel** it's important for everyone to play an active role in reducing this type of pollution.
  - 2 **I realise** that it could be difficult to cut costs like this.
  - 3 **I can see** that for people who have a disability, the internet provides an essential lifeline.
  - 4 **I suppose** that allowing adverts to be placed on a football pitch might help reduce the cost of tickets.
  - 5 **I believe** that if we all made a positive effort then we could make real progress.
  - 6 **I imagine** that people with high-powered jobs find it difficult to escape from work.
  - 7 **I am convinced** that there is a connection between computer use and obesity.
  - 8 **I suspect** that the rich are not as happy as we think they are.

## *Reaching a conclusion*

To finish off your writing, you need to write a conclusion. Your conclusion should be a brief summary of your argument and ideas and is often a good place to give your own opinion.

### 3.4 These concluding sentences all contain a mistake. Find the mistakes and correct them.

- 1 In conclusion, I completely disagree this view.
- 2 As far as I am concern, this is a problem without any real solution.
- 3 To summarise, even there is a clear downside to our dependence on technology, I honestly feel we have to find a way to cope with it because the internet is definitely here to stay.
- 4 In conclude, there are both negatives and positives to this system, but the negatives seem to far outweigh the positives.
- 5 In my point of view, education is a vital part of every child's life.

# Writing skills

## 8 Writing Task 2 – Checking and correcting

In this unit you will practise:

- developing your ideas clearly
- checking and correcting
- grammatical accuracy
- using correct punctuation
- assessing your language level

### 1 Developing your ideas clearly

When you have completed your writing, make sure you allow at least three or four minutes to check and read through your answer. First check your ideas against your plan.

- Did you include all of your ideas?
- Are your ideas organised and connected logically?

#### 1.1 Read the answer to this Writing Task on the following page.

*'The internet allows us to stay connected with each other no matter where we are. On the other hand, it also isolates us and encourages people not to socialise.'*

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?*

*Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.*



**Test Tip** The examiner will assess the **Grammatical Accuracy** of your answer. They will judge how accurate your sentence structures are, and also whether you have shown a **range** of structures and not limited yourself to basic ones. Make sure you vary your sentences in the exam.

#### 1.2 Before checking the spelling and grammar, consider the ideas and organisation of the answer.

- 1 Look at underlined words 1–10 in the answer. What ideas do these words refer back to? Why does the writer use them?
- 2 Find a word or phrase that is used to
  - a introduce what you want to talk about first
  - b introduce a contrasting idea
  - c add a supporting idea
  - d show you are giving an example
  - e show you are giving a personal opinion
  - f explain the result of an action or situation
  - g introduce a summary of the ideas in the answer
- 3 Write the plan the candidate might have used before beginning to write.

## Writing skills

The internet is a wonderful tool that helps us to keep in touch wherever we are. However, I do think that some people can find ~~it~~ quite addictive. Progress often comes at a price, and there are many who are concerned about the impact the internet has on our daily life.

First, let us consider the benefits the internet brought. Undoubtedly, the greatest of ~~these~~ is the ease with which ~~it~~ allows us to make contact with people anywhere in the world. Nowadays, the business world makes use of this every day. Without the internet, companies would find it extremely difficult to expand or meet the needs of ~~their~~ customers. This same ability to keep in touch extends into our personal lives. For example, when my cousins were backpacking around the world ~~they~~ were able to reassure their family and friends that all was well and also share memories almost immediately, using social networking sites.

Progress comes at a price, however, and there is another side to the coin. ~~This~~ convenience that the internet brings means that our work is only ever a mouse click away. Consequently, many people find it difficult to ever escape from work. In addition, the websites that encourage us to keep in touch may, ironically, lead to anti-social behaviour in some users. ~~These~~ people end up with more virtual friends than actual friendships. In reality, ~~their~~ feeling of connectedness may only be an illusion as ~~they~~ become more and more isolated in their homes.

To summarise, I completely agree that, although there are clear benefits to the internet, there are also certain risks. Having said that, I believe that ~~these~~ can be minimised through education. As far as I'm concerned, something that can bring the world into the home of a person who is disabled and essentially housebound, is more indispensable than intrusive.



**Study Tip** We use handwriting less and less these days, so make sure that you practise writing quickly and neatly. Ask others to read your writing to make sure it is legible. There may not be time in the exam to write and then rewrite your answer. It is better to spend time planning and then checking at the end.

## 2 Grammatical Accuracy

To achieve a high band score in the IELTS test, you need to show a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures and use them accurately.

### 2.1 Look again at the answer and find

- 1 four common spelling mistakes.
- 2 five problems with verbs.
- 3 a phrase that is repeated (decide which one to delete).

When you are writing quickly, it is easy to make silly mistakes. Use the final few minutes to carefully check what you wrote.

Check:

- **your spelling** – Check for careless spelling mistakes.
- **your grammar** – Check verb and subject agreement and check your tenses.
- **your punctuation** – Have you marked the end of a sentence with a full stop? Do any of your words need a capital letter?
- **your handwriting** – Are any words unclear that you need to write more clearly?

**2.2** These words are some of the words most commonly misspelt by IELTS candidates. The parts of the words that often cause problems have been underlined. Look at the words in A for one minute, then cover them and try to correct the mistakes in the words in B.

A	B
govern <u>ment</u>	govenment
unt <u>il</u>	untill
now <u>days</u>	nowdays
beli <u>eve</u>	belive
beca <u>use</u>	becuse
cou <u>ntries</u>	contries
peop <u>le</u>	peopl
opportunities	oppotunities
betwe <u>en</u>	betwen
enviro <u>nment</u>	enviroment
techn <u>ology</u>	tecnology
import <u>ant</u>	importent
experience	expereince
competition	competition
the <u>ir</u>	thier
moder <u>n</u>	morden
conclusion	concluson
chil <u>dren</u>	chidren
restau <u>rant</u>	resturant
society	soceity

Don't forget to check your punctuation. The most common mistakes are

- with capital letters.
- full stops.
- commas.

### 2.3 Correct the punctuation in these sentences.

- 1 According to the survey, the population will grow more and more, it is predicted that by 2050 the population will have increased by 30%.
- 2 Many famous film stars are american.
- 3 My conclusion; therefore is that teaching children to be good members of society is the job of both parents and the school.
- 4 the pie chart gives us information about the causes of land degradation worldwide.
- 5 Many children spend hours playing video games which can lead to health problems.
- 6 However, we can see that the rate of both National and international calls increased from 1995 to 2010.
- 7 Nowadays in many universities around the world university students can study any subject they like.



**Study Tip** Students often repeat the same mistakes. Get to know your own common mistakes and make sure you deliberately practise these – especially if the mistakes are spelling mistakes you repeatedly make.

## 3 Assessing your language

### 3.1 To help you try to assess the different band scores on the IELTS Writing paper, read these features of Bands 4, 6 and 8.

#### Band 4

- ideas are clear but there may be a lot of repetition
- uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively
- uses only a very limited range of grammatical structures and rarely accurately
- makes frequent spelling mistakes
- errors may cause problems for the reader

#### Band 6

- organises information and ideas clearly
- uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task
- uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms
- attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some mistakes
- makes some errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling but they don't cause problems for the reader

#### Band 8

- uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly
- uses a wide range of structures and the majority of sentences are accurate
- makes only very occasional mistakes
- skilfully uses uncommon vocabulary but there may be occasional mistakes
- errors in spelling are rare

**3.2** Now look at these extracts from three different Writing Task 2 answers. Match extracts A–C to the band score you think they received (4, 6 or 8).

- A**
- Television in general is one of the most important tools of our daily life now. From children to adults, every age group enjoys watching the television programmes of their interest. TV in its early days was mainly used for news broadcasting and other important awareness for the public. But now it heavily influences our lives and it almost became an addiction.
- In today's world, with the discovery of satellite television, almost every channel reaches our home and we have plenty of choice. In my opinion TV plays a great role in our lives as it's a major source of information of happenings around the world and one has enough information about another country before they have a chance to visit the place physically. In today's household one keeps track of programmes and can record them to watch it at a later more convenient time. So TV is not only a great tool for the enhancement of knowledge on every subject but also it's an entertainment package as without it life would be very dull and monotonous.
- B**
- Nowdays, with the developing of science and technology, more and more people use computers, computers are getting popular; people use computer to tap their essays, get information from internet, and computers are used in everywhere such as bank supermarket and so on. However, it has been widely noted that some people don't know how to use computers. It makes them inconvenient and uncomfortable in their lives. People who do not know how to use computers become more and more disadvantaged. Some people believe that government should make means to solve this problem. In my opinion, people who don't know how to use computers make them disadvantaged in three ways.
- C**
- Nowadays, technology is an essential part of education. The use of computers in a classroom is so common that it is almost impossible for students to follow their studies if they do not have computer skills. However, if the computer dominates the major role of education, what should be done with the teachers?
- Firstly, not all schools can provide computers for their students. In this case, colleges situated far away from big centers or better, in small towns, depend on teachers as the main source of knowledge for their children. Another point to be considered is the fact that not all the students are keen on working with computers or have enough skills to work with these modern machines.

**3.3** Look again at the band score descriptions. Which do you think is closer to a description of your own writing?

# IELTS Speaking

## How long is the Speaking paper?

The Speaking test is an interview with an examiner that lasts between 11 and 14 minutes.

## What will I need to talk about?

The interview has three separate parts and is divided up as follows.

Part	Timing	What will I need to talk about?
1	4–5 mins	The examiner will ask you questions about familiar topics (e.g. hobbies, likes and dislikes, daily routine).
2	3–4 mins	The examiner will give you a booklet showing a topic and some suggestions on it. You need to talk about the topic for 1–2 minutes. You have about one minute to write notes before you begin. The examiner may ask you some follow-up questions.
3	4–5 mins	The examiner will ask you more detailed and more abstract questions linked to the topic in part 2.

## How is the Speaking paper assessed?

The examiner will listen carefully to your answers and will assess your speaking according to the following criteria.

Criteria	What do these criteria mean?
Fluency and Coherence	Do you speak in a fluent way that is easy to understand? Do you link your ideas together clearly?
Lexical Resource	Can you accurately use or attempt to use a wide range of vocabulary accurately and effectively? Can you explain your ideas even if you do not know a particular word? Can you use or attempt to use higher-level vocabulary accurately?
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	Can you use a wide range of grammatical structures rather than repeating basic structures? Are your sentences accurate, or do you often make grammatical mistakes?
Pronunciation	Is your spoken language clear and easily understood? Do you use stress and intonation to add extra meaning? With individual words, do you use stress accurately?



## How can I improve my Speaking paper score?

You can improve your score by making sure you answer each question fully and remembering the test tips in this unit. This unit will also tell you the speaking skills you need to practise in order to achieve your best score. Before the test, practise speaking as often as you can and make sure that you can talk for two minutes on a topic. **Do not** try to learn answers for the test. Studying all aspects of English including pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar will also help improve your IELTS score.