**IELTS Exam Preparation India 2019 – 2020**

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) can stand you in good stead when it comes to your admission to any university of your choice in the US, Australia, the UK, New Zealand and Canada. You need to also take the test if you wish to migrate to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK. Here are the [minimum IELTS scores for student visa and immigration](https://www.mbacrystalball.com/ielts/ielts-scores).

You’d feel more prepared for the test if you take some practice tests. There are loads of resources available online for that. But first you need to mind the basics.

**Two types of IELTS tests and their formats**

You first need to understand which of the two tests suits your case. You can either take IELTS Academic or IELTS General Training. IELTS elaborates on the difference between the two tests [here](https://www.ielts.org/about-the-test/two-types-of-ielts-test).

The IELTS test is spread out in four formats, namely, listening, reading, writing and speaking, in that order. You need to take the first three tests one after the other, without any breaks in between. It is up to you if you wish to take the speaking test the same day or seven days before taking the three tests or seven days after taking the three tests. Come mentally prepared for an exhausting two hours and 45 minutes.

Both the tests are graded the same way, they differ from each other in the way the tests are structured. The IELTS Academic will carry questions that will assess your ability to work in a higher learning environment. The IELTS General Training on the other hand, will aim to test your ability to grasp the knowledge of English language in everyday life, at work, in social milieu, and the like.

The British Council explains at length [how the tests are spread out](http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-test/understand-test-format).

**Preparing for each of the four IELTS tests**

**Listening test**

Since you’d be taking the test to study/work/migrate to a particular set of countries, you can be sure that the listening test will have you listening to either Australian, British, New Zealand or North American accents. You will listen in to a pre-recorded voice, which will increase in difficulty as you go along.

The test is spread out into four sections. For the first section, you will hear a recording of instructions followed by a sample question. Then you will read the questions for this section beforehand, then listen to section 1 which is a regular social discussion between 2 that is common in daily life. Based on this, you will answer the questions. The process follows all the remaining three sections wherein you will listen to a monologue, again based on a social context in section 2, discussion between 2 to 4 in an educational or training situation for section 3 and a monologue on an academic topic (e.g. a lecture) for section 4.

The questions can be multiple choice, labelling a plan / map / diagram, complete a form / table / flow chart or short answer format. All correct answers carry 1 mark each.

Once you are done listening to and answering all the 40 questions, you will have to put down your answers on an answer sheet (you’ll find a sample [here](http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-your-test/understand-test-format/listening-test/example-listening-test-answer-sheet)) using a pencil. This has a different format, so you must familiarize yourself with it.

**Reading Test**

A 60-minute test, it has three sections having three different passages to read with relevant 40 questions that carry 1 mark each. The questions will be relevant to IELTS Academic or IELTS General Training requirement. The British Council explains at length what you can expect in the [reading sections](http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-test/understand-test-format/reading-test).

Answers may be required to be given in the form of fill in the blanks with text or in a table, match headings with charts or diagrams, short answers, answers for multiple choice questions or complete sentences.

**Writing Test**

Divided into 20 minutes for task 1 and 40 minutes for task 2, the IELTS writing test goes on without a break so you would not get to know when the time for task 1 would end. You would need to manage your time yourself and finish both the tasks in 60 minutes.

For task 1, you will see a graph/table/chart/diagram which you’d have to describe in 150 words in formal writing. For task 2, you have to write an essay of 250 words on a given argument/problem/point of view in an informal style.

**Speaking Test**

The whole purpose of this test is to assess if you can communicate yourself well. This test is of the shortest duration out of the four tests, around 11 to 14 minutes.

You’d spend initial 4 to 5 minutes introducing yourself and talking about familiar topics as family, work, studies, etc. In the next 3 to 4 minutes, you’d get a topic, a minute to prepare mentally and then talk about that topic for a minute or two.

Post this, you will be asked questions related to it. In the last section of this test of 4 to 5 minutes’ duration, you will have to answer more questions on the same topic that you spoke about.

**General tips for IELTS preparation**

* If you find audio equipment not working properly, intimate the test centre staff immediately.
* For the listening test, try and answer the questions in the order they are in as these follow the order of the information in the recording.
* Ensure your spellings and grammar is correct.
* The extract given for reading should be analysed with the topic, style of writing, the writer’s intent, likely source. If you don’t understand any specific word, move on. Don’t brood over it. You don’t have time.
* Read the instructions carefully before answering, as the instructions are extremely specific, as whether you should use a formal style of informal style, if you should use your own words or pick out text from the given extract, exactly how many words to use while giving an answer, and the like.
* For writing test, stick to the word limit given. You can exceed it, but don’t fall short of it.
* Speak so you are understood clearly. Remember you are not there to show off your knowledge.

**IELTS practice tests**

Once you are familiar with the exam format, you can then shift to taking sample tests, preferably within a time period of the actual test, with no breaks in between just like the D-day.

You can opt for these tests, both online and offline. If you take it online, then there are links online where you can complete the given task on one webpage, and move on to the next after finishing one section. If you wish to take time to do them first, then you have the option to download them offline along with blank answer sheets, transcripts and answers from introductory pages. The British Council website has several free IELTS practice tests ([click here](http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-test/free-practice-tests)) that can help you practice well. Even [IDP Education](https://www.ieltsessentials.com/global/prepare/freepracticetests) offers a whole lot of free practice tests.

Most resources available online will have you register for them, though for free to be able to access the practice tests. There are still some IELTS practice tests that are [available even without online registration](http://ieltsforfree.com/free-ielts-practice-tests/). You can find more free online mock tests on [this site](http://www.ieltsbuddy.com/).

With these practice tests, you’d know what to expect, get experience of handling the questions, and also evaluate your answers by checking them in the model answer sheet.

**IELTS practice resources**

Whether you take the free practice tests or no, it always is a good idea to have more resources available to your disposal to get things right. The British Council for instance, offers an e-learning and assessment tool called [Road to IELTS](http://www.roadtoielts.com/testdrive/). It not only has mock tests, but also includes preparatory material, exercises for writing as well as listening tests and the like.  
   
Read more about the [IELTS exam](https://www.mbacrystalball.com/ielts) and the [Best IELTS Preparation Books](https://www.mbacrystalball.com/ielts/best-ielts-books). Also [TOEFL IELTS Waiver for the top universities abroad](https://www.mbacrystalball.com/blog/2018/12/24/toefl-ielts-waiver/) for those who wish to forego it.