



Writing

ROAD TO IELTS

Information about the test



The Writing Test

The basics

The writing test lasts for 60 minutes. There are two tasks. You should spend about 20 minutes on task one and about 40 minutes on task two. Task two is worth twice as many marks as task one.

Task 1: You have to write at least 150 words.

Task 2: You have to write at least 250 words.

The type of task will depend on whether you are taking the Academic or General Training modules.

Academic module overview

- Task 1:
You will describe, in your own words, information contained in a graph, diagram, table or chart. Information may be data in word or number form, stages in a process, how something works or you may need to describe an object or event.
- Task 2:
You will write a short essay in response to a topic which is presented as a point of view, an argument or a problem.

General Training module overview

- Task 1:
You will write a letter in response to an everyday situation or problem. For example, you may be asked to request information or explain a situation.
- Task 2:
Write an essay in response to a point of view, argument or problem.

What the examiner is looking for

The examiner assesses writing against the same general criteria in both Academic and General Training Modules.

Task	Criteria	How responses are assessed
1	Task achievement	How appropriately, accurately and relevantly you fulfill task requirements
2	Task response	Task two asks you to formulate and develop a position in relation to a prompt in the form of a question or statement. Your ideas should be supported by evidence. You may draw examples from your own experience. You should write at least 250 words. If you write fewer words than 250, examiners will deduct marks.
For both tasks	Coherence and cohesion	the overall clarity and fluency of the message; how well you organise and link information and ideas; logical sequencing and appropriate use of linking devices between and within sentences
	Lexical resource	the range of vocabulary you use; how accurate and appropriate it is in relation to the specific task
	Grammatical range and accuracy	the range and accurate use of grammar as seen in the candidate's writing at the sentence level

Task example

Academic module: task 1

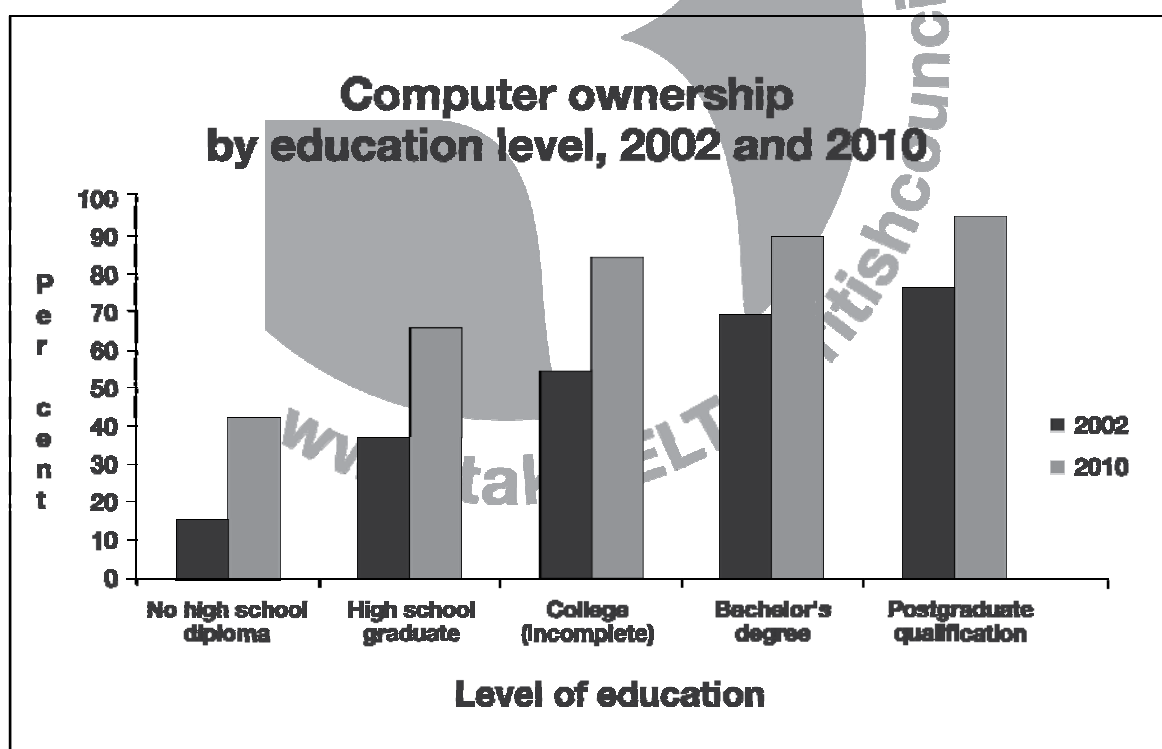
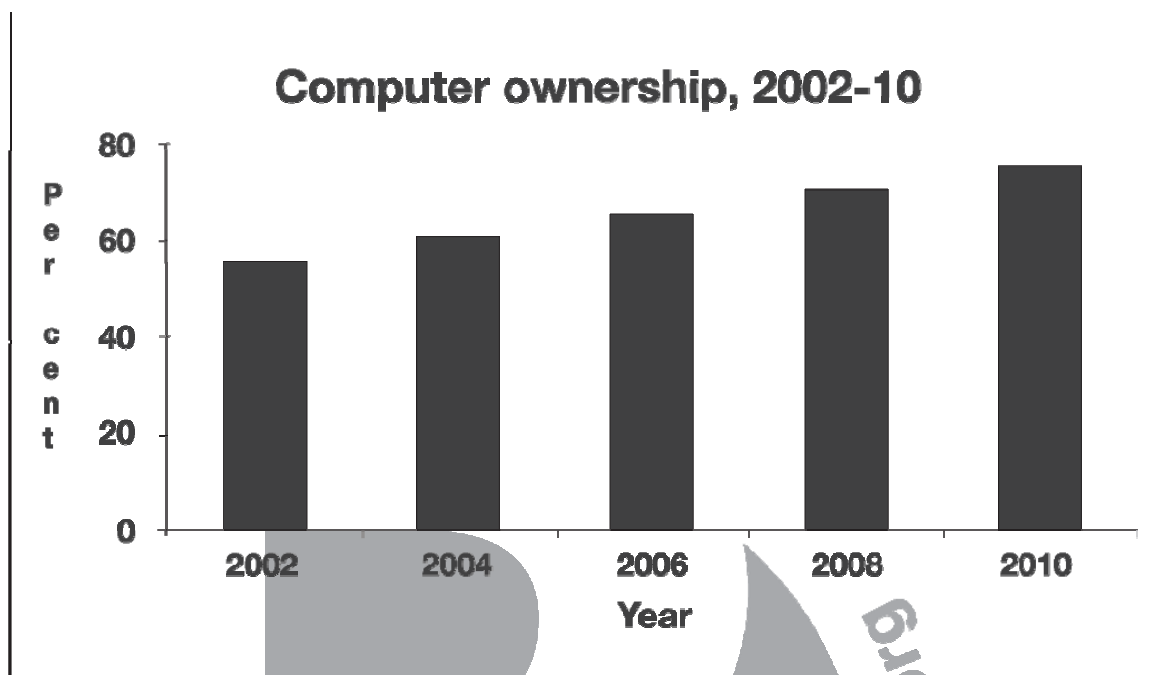
Example

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The graphs below give information about computer ownership as a percentage of the population between 2002 and 2010, and by level of education for the years 2002 and 2010.

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

Write at least 150 words.



Task example

Academic module: task 2



You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

A person's worth nowadays seems to be judged according to social status and material possessions. Old-fashioned values, such as honour, kindness and trust, no longer seem important.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?

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

Write at least 250 words.



Task example

General Training module: task 1



You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

A friend has agreed to look after your house and pet while you are on holiday.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter

- *give contact details for when you are away*
- *give instructions about how to care for your pet*
- *describe other household duties*

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear,



Task example

General Training module: task 2



You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Some people believe that teaching children at home is best for a child's development while others think that it is important for children to go to school.

Discuss the advantages of both methods and give your own opinion.

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

Write at least 250 words.



Tips and advice for getting the score you need

General advice for tasks 1 and 2 (for both modules)

- Timing is very important. Do spend enough time planning your answer and gathering your ideas before starting to write. If your writing is well-planned, you will be able to write more quickly and stop less frequently to think about what to write next.
- Try to avoid repeating the same words, phrases and ideas too often. Try to use a range of vocabulary.
- Try to make sure that you do not repeat the same idea too often. Explore different ideas to provide a well-balanced response.
- Word count is important. You lose marks if you write fewer than the required number of words. If you write a lot more words, the examiner will not assess them all and this will be time wasted.
- Allow time at the end to check your answer for careless mistakes. Check for mistakes in spelling, subject-verb agreement, singular / plural nouns, and tenses.
- Do not simply copy words and phrases from the question paper. Try to use your own words by paraphrasing the question.
- Stay on topic. Always ask yourself as you write, e.g.: “Am I answering the question?”
- If you have problems with time-keeping, consider doing task two before task one. Task two carries twice as many marks.
- Do not waste your time memorising essays or model answers to use in the test. Examiners are trained to spot pre-prepared answers and you will lose marks.

Task 1 (for Academic module only)

- Always try and include an introduction sentence. Your introduction should not simply repeat what is written in the task instructions. The examiner will ignore this kind of information. Your introduction can, for example, present an overall summary of what you are trying to communicate.
- It is important to show that you understand the function of paragraphs. Try to find an appropriate way to divide your answer into at least two paragraphs.
- A useful two-step pattern to follow is: first, state a trend, and then second, support your statement with an item of detail from the table or chart.
- Do not make any assumptions about information that is not given in the diagrams or charts. Do not attempt to explain the information using your general knowledge.
- When the task has more than one visual image showing data, check carefully to see whether you should be writing about them together or separately. Sometimes you need to compare them, but usually they should be described separately.

Task two (for both modules)

- You need an introduction, clearly divided paragraphs and a conclusion.
- Do not make your introduction too long. You need to allow enough time for the main part of your essay.
- Be sure to provide supporting evidence for any opinion you give.
- All ideas in your paragraphs need to be supported by examples.
- End your essay with a conclusion. Usually, this is a summary of your key points and your final viewpoint.
- Do not use note form or bullet points.
- Leave some time at the end to go back through your essay and edit for simple grammar or spelling mistakes.
- Remember that task 2 carries more marks than task 1, and so allow yourself plenty of time to answer.

Good luck in your writing test!