**What’s in the IELTS Listening test?**

The test has four sections, with ten questions in each section. The questions are in the same order as the information in the recording, so the answer to the first question will be before the answer to the second question, and so on.

Sections 1 and 2 deal with **everyday, social situations**. There is a conversation between two speakers in Section 1 (for example, a conversation about travel arrangements). Only one person speaks in Section 2 (for example, a speech about local facilities).

Sections 3 and 4 deal with **educational and training situations**. In Section 3 there is a conversation between two main speakers (for example, two university students in discussion, perhaps guided by a tutor). In Section 4 only one person speaks on an academic subject.

You will hear the recordings once only. Different accents, including British, Australian, New Zealand and North American, are used.

You will need to transfer your answers to an answer sheet. You will have 10 minutes at the end of the test to do this. You should **be careful when writing your answers on the answer sheet** because you will lose marks for incorrect spelling and grammar.

**Summary**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Time allowed: | Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes to transfer your answers to an answer sheet) |
| Number of sections: | 4 |
| Number of questions: | 40 |
| Marking: | Each correct answer receives 1 mark.  Your final score is given as a band score in whole or half bands, e.g. 5.5 or 7.0. |

**Types of question**

**Question Type 1 – Multiple choice**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | This type of question may be a question with three possible answers or the first half of a sentence with three possible sentence endings. You have to choose one correct answer, A, B or C, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet.    Sometimes you are given a longer list of possible answers and you have to choose more than one answer. You should read the question carefully to check how many answers you need to choose. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests many listening skills, e.g. a detailed understanding of specific points, or general understanding of the main points of the recording. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 2 – Matching**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to match a list of items from the recording to a list of options on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to:     * - listen for detailed information. For example, whether you can understand information about the type of hotel or guest house accommodation in an everyday conversation * - follow a conversation between two people * - recognise how facts in the recording are connected to each other. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 3 – Plan/map/diagram labelling**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to complete labels on a visual which may be:     * - a diagram (e.g. a piece of equipment) * - a set of pictures * - a plan (e.g. of a building) * - a map (e.g. of part of a town).   You may have to:   * - select your answers from a list on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet * - select words from the recording which fit into gaps on the question paper. In this case, you will need to keep to the word limit given in the instructions. You do not have to change the words in the recording in any way.     You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.  Write the words that fit into the gap on the answer sheet. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to understand, for example, a description of a place, and how this description relates to the visual. It may also test your ability to understand explanations of where things are and follow directions (e.g. straight on/through the far door). |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 4 – Form/note/table/flow chart/summary completion**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to fill in gaps in an outline of part or all of the recording. The outline will focus on the main ideas/facts in the recording and may be:    - a form: often used for facts, such as names   * - a set of notes: used to summarise information and show how different points relate to one another * - a table: used to summarise information that can be divided into clear categories, e.g. place/time/price * - a flow chart: used to summarise the stages in a process, with the direction of the process shown by arrows.   You may have to:   * - select your answers from a list on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet * - select words from the recording which fit into gaps on the question paper. In this case, you will need to keep to the word limit given in the instructions. You do not have to change the words in the recording in any way.   You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.    Write the words that fit into the gap on the answer sheet. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question focuses on the main points the person listening would naturally write down. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 5 – Sentence completion**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to read sentences that summarise important information from either all of the listening text or from one part of it. You have to fill in a gap in each sentence using information from the recording.    You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.   Write the words that fit into the gap on the answer sheet. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question focuses on your ability to identify the important information in a recording. You may also need to understand relationships between ideas/facts/events, such as cause and effect. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 6 – Short-answer questions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to read a question and write a short answer using information from the recording.   You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.  Write your answer on the answer sheet.   Sometimes you are given a question which asks you to write two or three different answers. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question focuses on your ability to listen for facts, such as places, prices or times, heard in the recording. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**What’s in the IELTS Academic Reading test?**

There are three reading texts with a variety of question types.

Texts come from books, journals, magazines, newspapers and online resources, written for a non-specialist audience. All the **topics are of general interest to students at undergraduate or postgraduate level**. The texts may be written in different styles, for example, narrative, descriptive or discursive/argumentative. At least one text contains detailed logical argument. Texts may also contain diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts use technical vocabulary, then a simple dictionary definition is provided.

You will need to transfer your answers to an answer sheet. You must transfer your answers during the hour you are given for the Reading test. Unlike the Listening test, no extra transfer time is given. You should **be careful when writing your answers on the answer sheet** because you will lose marks for incorrect spelling and grammar.

**Summary**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Time allowed: | 60 minutes (including transfer time) |
| Number of sections: | 3; the total text length is 2,150–2,750 words |
| Number of questions: | 40 |
| Marking: | Each correct answer receives 1 mark.  Your final score is given as a band score from 1–9 in whole or half bands, e.g. 4, 6.5. |

**Types of question**

**Question Type 1 – Multiple choice**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | This type of question may be a question with four possible answers or the first half of a sentence with four possible sentence endings. You have to choose one correct answer (A, B, C or D), then write the correct answer on the answer sheet.   Sometimes you are given a longer list of possible answers and you have to choose more than one answer. You should read the question carefully to check how many answers you need to choose.   The questions are in the same order as the information in the text: that is, the answer to the first question will be before the answer to the second question, and so on. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests many different reading skills including: detailed understanding of specific points or general understanding of the main points of the text. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 2 – Identifying information (True/False/Not given)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you are given a number of statements and are asked: ‘Do the following statements agree with the information in the text?’ You have to write ‘True’, ‘False’ or ‘Not given’ in the boxes on your answer sheet. It is important to understand the difference between ‘False’ and ‘Not given’. ‘False’ means that the statement contradicts the information in the text. ‘Not given’ means that the statement neither agrees with nor contradicts the information in the text. You must be careful not to use any information you already know about the topic of the text when choosing your answer. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to recognise specific information given in the text. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 3 – Identifying writer’s views/claims (Yes/No/Not given)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you are given a number of statements and asked: ‘Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer?’ or ‘Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer?’ You have to write ‘Yes’, ‘No’ or ‘Not given’ in the boxes on your answer sheet. It is important to understand the difference between ‘no’ and ‘not given’. ‘No’ means that the statement contradicts the writer’s view or claim. ‘Not given’ means that the statement neither agrees with nor contradicts the writer’s view or claim. You must be careful not to use any information you already know about the topic of the text when choosing your answer. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to recognise opinions or ideas. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 4 – Matching information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to find specific information in the paragraphs (or sections) of a text. The paragraphs (or sections) are identified by letters (A, B, C, etc.). You will need to write the letters of the correct paragraphs (or sections) in the boxes on your answer sheet. Not every paragraph (or section) may be used and some paragraphs (or sections) may be used more than once. When the paragraphs (or sections) may be used more than once, the instructions will say: ‘You may use any letter more than once’. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question assesses your ability to scan a text in order to find specific information. Unlike Task Type 5 (Matching headings), it focuses on specific information rather than the main idea. You may have to find: specific details, an example, reason, description, comparison, summary or explanation. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 5 – Matching headings**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, there is a list of headings which are identified by Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.). A heading summarises the main idea of a paragraph or section of the text. You must match the heading to the correct paragraph or section. The paragraphs (or sections) are identified by letters (A, B, C, etc.). You will need to write the correct Roman numerals in the boxes on your answer sheet. There will always be more headings than paragraphs or sections, so some headings will not be used. It is also possible that some paragraphs or sections may not be included in the task. One or more paragraphs or sections may already be matched with a heading as an example on the question paper. No heading may be used more than once. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to identify the general topic of a paragraph (or section) and to recognise the difference between the main idea and a supporting idea. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 6 – Matching features**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to match a set of statements or pieces of information to a list of options. The options are a group of features from the text, and letters (A, B, C, etc.) are used to identify them. Write the correct letter on the answer sheet. You may, for example, have to match descriptions of inventions to the people who invented them. It is possible that some options will not be used, and that others may be used more than once. When it is possible to use any option more than once, the instructions will say: ‘You may use any option more than once’. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to recognise relationships and connections between facts in the text and your ability to recognise opinions and theories. You need to be able to skim and scan the text to find the information quickly so that you can then read that part more carefully for detail. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 7 – Matching sentence endings**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you are given the first half of a sentence based on information in the text and you have to choose the best way to complete the sentence by choosing from a list of possible endings. The endings are identified by letters (A, B, C, etc.). There will be more sentence endings than beginnings, so you will not use all of them. You must write the letter you choose on the answer sheet. The sentence beginnings are in the same order as the information in the text. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to understand the main ideas in the text. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 8 – Sentence completion**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to fill in a gap in each sentence by choosing words from the text. You must write the words you choose on the answer sheet.  You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.  The questions are in the same order as the information in the text. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to find detail/specific information in a text. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 9 – Summary/note/table/flow chart completion**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you are given a summary of a part of the text, and have to complete it using words taken from the text. Note that the summary is not normally of the whole text. The summary may be in the form of:   * a continuous text (called ‘a summary’ in the instructions) * several notes (called ‘notes’ in the instructions) * a table with some parts of it left empty or partially empty (called ‘a table’ in the instructions) * a series of boxes or steps linked by arrows to show the order of events, with some of the boxes or steps empty or partially empty (called ‘a flow chart’ in the instructions).   The answers may not come in the same order as in the text. However, they will usually come from one part of the text rather than the whole text.  There are two variations of this task type. In the first variation, you need to select words from the text which fit into gaps on the question paper. You must write the words you choose on the answer sheet.  You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.  In the second variation, you have to choose from a list of words to fill the gaps. The words are identified by letters (A, B, C, etc.).  You must write the letter you choose on the answer sheet. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to understand details and/or the main ideas of a part of the text. When completing this type of question, you will need to think about the type of word(s) that will fit into a gap (for example, whether a noun is needed, or a verb, etc.). |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 10 – Diagram label completion**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to complete the labels on a diagram. The diagram is based on a description given in the text. The diagram may be a type of machine, part of a building or of other information in the text that can be shown through pictures. Write the words that fit into the gap on the answer sheet.  You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words.  The answers may not come in the same order as in the text. However, they will usually come from one part of the text rather than the whole text. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to understand a detailed description in the text, and then relate that description to information given in a diagram. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**Question Type 11 – Short-answer questions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this type of question, you have to answer questions about factual details in the text. You must write your answers in words or numbers on the answer sheet.   Answers must be taken from words in the text. A word limit is given, for example, ‘NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER’. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Numbers can be written using figures (1, 2, etc.) or words (one, two, etc.). Contracted words such as ‘they’re’ will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as ‘check-in’ count as single words. The answers come in the same order as the information in the text. |
| What skills are tested? | This type of question tests your ability to find and understand specific information in the text. |
| How many questions are there? | Variable. |

**What’s in the IELTS Academic Writing test?**

There are two Writing tasks and BOTH must be completed.

In Task 1, you have to **describe some visual information in your own words** (a graph, table, chart or diagram). You need to write at least 150 words in about 20 minutes.

In Task 2, you are given **a point of view, argument or problem which you need to discuss**. You need to write at least 250 words in about 40 minutes.

You must write your answers using full sentences. You must not write your answers as notes or bullet points. You must write your answers on the answer sheet. You are allowed to write notes on the question paper, but these will not be seen by the examiner.

**Marking**

Certificated IELTS examiners assess your performance on each Writing task. There are four assessment criteria (things which the examiner thinks about when deciding what score to give you):

* - Task achievement/response
* - Coherence and cohesion
* - Lexical resource
* - Grammatical range and accuracy.

Task achievement (in Task 1) and Task response (in Task 2) assesses how accurately, appropriately and relevantly your response covers the task requirements, using the minimum of 150 words for Task 1 and 250 words for Task 2.

In Task 1, all the information you require is given in the diagram.

In Task 2, Task response includes how well you develop your argument in response to the task, giving evidence and examples which may be from your own experience.

Coherence and cohesion assesses how clear and fluent your writing is, and how you organise ideas and information. It includes giving your ideas in a logical order, and using a range of cohesive devices (for example, linking words, pronouns and conjunctions, etc.) appropriately.

Lexical resource assesses the range of vocabulary you have used, and how accurately and appropriately you use it.

Grammatical range and accuracy assesses the range of grammar you have used and how accurately and appropriately you have used it.

**Summary**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Time allowed: | 60 minutes |
| Number of tasks: | 2 |
| Marking: | Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score. |

**Tasks 1 and 2**

**Academic Writing – Task 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In Academic Writing Task 1, you may be asked to describe:   * one or more graphs, charts or tables * a diagram of an object, device, process or event. You have to include the most important points in the diagram. Some minor points or details may be left out.   You should write in an academic or semi-formal/neutral style.  You should spend no more than 20 minutes on this task. You must write at least 150 words and will be penalised if your answer is too short. While you will not be penalised for writing more than 150 words, you should remember that a longer Task 1 answer may mean that you have less time to spend on Task 2, which contributes twice as much to your Writing band score.  You should remember that you will be penalised if what you write does not relate to the topic. You will also be penalised if your answer is not written as a whole piece of connected text (i.e. you must not use notes or bullet points). You will be severely penalised if your writing is plagiarised (i.e. copied from another source).  You must write your answer on the answer sheet. |
| What skills are tested? | This task tests if you can give a well-organised overview of the visual information using language that is appropriate in its register and style.  Depending on the task type, you will be assessed on your ability to:   * organise, present and possibly compare data * describe stages of a process or procedure * describe an object, event or sequence of events * explain how something works. |
| How much do I have to write? | A minimum of 150 words. |

**Academic Writing – Task 2**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In Academic Writing Task 2, you are given a topic to write about. Your answer should discuss the most relevant issues. You must read the task carefully so that you can write a full answer that is relevant. For example, if the topic is a particular aspect of the wider topic of computers, you should focus on this aspect only in your answer. You should not simply write about computers in general.  You should write in an academic or semi-formal/neutral style. You will need to organise your ideas clearly and make sure you use relevant examples (which can be from your own experience, if relevant) or evidence.  You should spend no more than 40 minutes on this task. You must write at least 250 words and will be penalised if your answer is too short. While you will not be penalised for writing more than 250 words, if you write a very long answer you may not have time for checking and correcting at the end, and some ideas may not be directly relevant to the question. You may also produce handwriting which is unclear.  You should remember that you will be penalised if what you write is not related to the topic. You will also be penalised if your answer is not written as a whole piece of connected text (i.e. you must not use notes or bullet points). You will be severely penalised if your writing is plagiarised (i.e. copied from another source).  You must write your answer on the answer sheet. |
| What skills are tested? | This task tests if you can write a clear, relevant, well-organised argument, giving evidence or examples to support your ideas, and use language accurately.  Depending on the task type, you will be assessed on your ability to:   * present a solution to a problem * present and justify an opinion * compare and contrast evidence, opinions and implications * evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or an argument. |
| How much do I have to write? | You must write a minimum of 250 words. |

**What’s in the IELTS Speaking test?**

The Speaking test is a **face-to-face interview** between the candidate and an examiner. The Speaking test is recorded.

There are three parts to the test, and each part follows a specific pattern of tasks in order to test your speaking ability in different ways.

**Marking**

Certificated IELTS examiners assess your speaking performance throughout the test. There are four assessment criteria (things which the examiner thinks about when deciding what score to give you):

* - Fluency and coherence
* - Lexical resource
* - Grammatical range and accuracy
* - Pronunciation.

Fluency and coherence assesses how well you can speak at a normal speed without too much hesitation. It also includes putting your sentences and ideas in a logical order and using cohesive devices (including linking words, pronouns and conjunctions, etc.) appropriately so that what you say is not difficult to follow.

Lexical resource assesses the range of vocabulary you use and how accurately and appropriately you use vocabulary to express meaning. It also includes the ability to express yourself using alternative vocabulary when you don’t know a particular word.

Grammatical range and accuracy assesses the range of grammar you use and how accurately and appropriately you use it.

Pronunciation assesses your ability to speak in a way which can be understood without too much effort.

**Summary**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Time allowed: | 11–14 minutes |
| Number of parts: | 3 |

**Parts 1–3**

**Part 1 – Introduction and interview**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In this part, the examiner introduces him/herself and checks your identity. Then the examiner asks you general questions on some familiar topics, such as home, family, work, studies or interests.  Part 1 is 4–5 minutes long. |
| What skills are tested? | This part tests your ability to give opinions and information on everyday topics and common experiences or situations by answering a range of questions. |

**Part 2 – Long turn**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | Part 2 is the individual long turn. The examiner gives you a task card which asks you to talk about a particular topic. The card tells you what points you should include in your talk and instructs you to explain one aspect of the topic. You have one minute to prepare your talk, and the examiner will give you a pencil and paper to make notes.  By using the points on the task card and making notes during the preparation time, you should be able to think of appropriate things to say, and have time to structure your talk so that you keep talking for 2 minutes.  The examiner will then ask you to begin talking and will stop you when the time is up. They may then ask you one or two questions on the same topic.  Part 2 lasts 3–4 minutes, including the preparation time. |
| What skills are tested? | This part tests your ability to speak at length on a given topic, using appropriate language and organising your ideas logically. You will need to think about your own experiences to complete the long turn. |

**Part 3 – Discussion**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What's involved? | In Part 3, you and the examiner discuss issues related to the topic in Part 2 in a more general and abstract way and, where appropriate, in greater depth.  Part 3 lasts 4–5 minutes. |
| What skills are tested? | This part tests your ability to explain your opinions and to analyse, discuss and speculate about issue |

|  |
| --- |
| **Listening** |
| **Band score** | **Raw score out of 40** |
| 5 | 16 |
| 6 | 23 |
| 7 | 30 |
| 8 | 35 |
|  |  |
| **Academic Reading** |  |
| **Band score** | **Raw score out of 40** |
| 5 | 15 |
| 6 | 23 |
| 7 | 30 |
| 8 | 35 |
|  |  |
| **General Training Reading** |  |
| **Band score** | **Raw score out of 40** |
| 4 | 15 |
| 5 | 23 |
| 6 | 30 |
| 7 | 34 |