

INTRODUCTION TO IELTS

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is one of the most widely recognized English language proficiency tests for non-native English speakers. It's jointly managed by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia, and Cambridge Assessment English, and is commonly used for admission to educational institutions, employment, and immigration purposes in English-speaking countries.

Types of IELTS Tests

There are two main versions of the IELTS exam:

1. **IELTS Academic** – for those applying for higher education or professional registration in an English-speaking environment.
2. **IELTS General Training** – for those seeking work experience, secondary education, or training programs, or for migration purposes to countries like the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Test Format

The IELTS exam tests four language skills:

1. **Listening** – 40 questions in 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes to transfer answers to the answer sheet).
2. **Reading** – 40 questions in 60 minutes, with texts and questions differing based on Academic or General Training versions.
3. **Writing** – 2 tasks in 60 minutes. Task 1 involves describing information or a situation, and Task 2 is an essay.

4. **Speaking** – A face-to-face interview with an examiner, lasting 11–14 minutes and consisting of three parts: introduction, topic discussion, and general discussion.

Scoring and Band System

IELTS is scored on a 9-band scale, with each skill receiving a score and an overall band score. Scores are as follows:

- 9: Expert user
- 8: Very good user
- 7: Good user
- 6: Competent user
- 5: Modest user
- 4: Limited user
- 3: Extremely limited user
- 2: Intermittent user
- 1: Non-user

Importance of IELTS

IELTS is critical for those who wish to study, work, or migrate to English-speaking countries. It not only assesses English language proficiency but also reflects one's ability to communicate effectively in academic, professional, and everyday situations. It's a comprehensive test, giving test-takers a reliable benchmark of their English skills, which is recognized by over 11,000 organizations worldwide.

Understanding IELTS band score

All IELTS scores are between 0 and 9, and each test component (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking) gets a separate band score. These individual scores are averaged to determine the overall IELTS band score, which is then rounded to the nearest whole or half score. For example, if the average is not a direct .5 or whole number (e.g., 7.5), it's adjusted to the closest .5 or whole number.

How IELTS band score is calculated?

Both Academic and General Training tests have the same IELTS band score chart.

IELTS band score 9 skill level: Expert

- The test taker has a fully operational command of the language
- Their use of English is appropriate, accurate, and fluent, and shows complete understanding

IELTS band score 8 skill level: Very good

- The test taker has a fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriate usage
- They may misunderstand some things in unfamiliar situations. They handle complex and detailed argumentation well

IELTS band score 7 skill level: Good

- The test taker has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriate usage, and misunderstandings in some situations

- They generally handle complex language well and understand detailed reasoning

IELTS band score 6 skill level: Competent

- The test taker has an effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriate usage, and misunderstandings
- They can use and understand reasonably complex language, particularly in familiar situations

IELTS band score 5 skill level: Modest

- The test taker has partial command of the language and copes with overall meaning in most situations, although they are likely to make many mistakes
- They should be able to handle basic communication in their field

IELTS band score 4 skill level: Limited

- The test taker's basic competence is limited to familiar situations
- They frequently show problems in understanding and expression

IELTS band score 3 skill level: Extremely limited

- The test taker conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations
- There are frequent breakdowns in communication

IELTS band score 2 skill level: Intermittent

- The test taker has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English

IELTS band score 1 skill level: Non-user

- The test taker cannot use the language except a few isolated words

IELTS band score 0 skill level: Did not attempt the test

- The test taker did not answer the questions

