**IELTS- level descriptors**

**IELTS Band Score: 8 Skill Level: Very good**

* The test taker has 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 a 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 own 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.

**Scoring**

The IELTS **Listening** test contains 40 questions (4 recorded texts). Each correct answer is awarded 1 mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale. Scores are reported in whole and half bands. (30 minutes, 25% of score)

Here are the average number of marks scored at different levels of the IELTS scale in Listening section. The precise number of marks needed to achieve these band scores will vary slightly from test version to test version.

#### **Marks out of 40**

* **Band Score 5:** Listening 16
* **Band Score 6:** Listening 23
* **Band Score 7:** Listening 30
* **Band Score 8:**Listening 35

The IELTS Reading test contains 40 questions (4 long passages). Each correct answer is awarded 1 mark. Scores out of 40 are converted to the IELTS 9-band scale. Scores are reported in whole and half bands. (60 minutes, 25% of score)

The IELTS **Academic and General Training Reading** tests are graded on the same scale. The Academic Reading test may contain texts which feature more difficult vocabulary or greater complexity of style. It is usual that a greater number of questions must be answered correctly on a General Training Reading test to secure a given band score.

Here are the average number of marks scored at different levels of the IELTS scale in Academic Reading, and General Training Reading sections. The precise number of marks needed to achieve these band scores will vary slightly from test version to test version.

#### **Marks out of 40**

* **Band Score 5:**Academic Reading 15 | General Training Reading 15
* **Band Score 6:**Academic Reading 23 | General Training Reading 23
* **Band Score 7:**Academic Reading 30 | General Training Reading 34
* **Band Score 8:**Academic Reading 35 | General Training Reading 38

**Writing**- Examiners use assessment criteria to award a score for each of the following four criteria, (60 minutes 25% of score):

* Task achievement (for task 1) and task response (for task 2)
* Coherence and cohesion
* Lexical resource
* Grammatical range and accuracy.

Each task is assessed independently. The criteria are weighted equally and the score on the task is the average. The assessment of Task 2 carries more weight in marking than Task 1.

Academic Writing Task 1 This Writing task has a defined input and a largely predictable output. It is basically an information-transfer task, which relates narrowly to the factual content of a diagram, graph, table, chart, map or other visual input, not to speculative explanations that lie outside the given data. The TA criterion assesses the ability to summarize the information provided in the diagram by: ▪ selecting key features of the information. ▪ providing sufficient detail to illustrate these features. ▪ reporting the information, figures and trends accurately. ▪ comparing or contrasting the information by adequately highlighting the identifiable trends, principal changes or differences in the data and other inputs (rather than mechanical description reporting detail). ▪ presenting the response in an appropriate format. General Training Writing Task 1 This Writing task also has a largely predictable output in that each task sets out the context and purpose of the letter and the functions the candidate should cover in order to achieve this purpose. The TA criterion assesses the ability to: ▪ clearly explain the purpose of the letter. ▪ fully address the three bullet-pointed requirements set out in the task. ▪ extend these three functions appropriately and relevantly. ▪ use an appropriate format for the letter. ▪ consistently use a tone appropriate to the task. Task 2 TASK RESPONSE (TR) For Task 2 of both AC and GT Writing tests, candidates are required to formulate and develop a position in relation to a given prompt in the form of a question or statement, using a minimum of 250 words. Ideas should be supported by evidence, and examples may be drawn from a candidate’s own experience.

The TR criterion assesses: ▪ how fully the candidate responds to the task. ▪ how adequately the main ideas are extended and supported. ▪ how relevant the candidate’s ideas are to the task. ▪ how clearly the candidate opens the discourse, establishes their position and formulates conclusions. ▪ how appropriate the format of the response is to the task. Task 1 and Task 2 COHERENCE AND COHESION (CC) This criterion is concerned with the overall organization and logical development of the message: how the response organizes and links information, ideas and language. Coherence refers to the linking of ideas through logical sequencing, while cohesion refers to the varied and appropriate use of cohesive devices (e.g. logical connectors, conjunctions and pronouns) to assist in making clear the relationships between and within sentences. The CC criterion assesses: ▪ the coherence of the response via the logical organization of information and/or ideas, or the logical progression of the argument. ▪ the appropriate use of paragraphing for topic organization and presentation. ▪ the logical sequencing of ideas and/or information within and across paragraphs. ▪ the flexible use of reference and substitution (e.g. definite articles, pronouns). ▪ the appropriate use of discourse markers to clearly mark the stages in a response, e.g. [First of all | In conclusion], and to signal the relationship between ideas and/or information, e.g. [as a result | similarly

LEXICAL RESOURCE (LR) This criterion refers to the range of vocabulary the candidate has used and the accuracy and appropriacy of that use in terms of the specific task. The LR criterion assesses: ▪ the range of general words used (e.g. the use of synonyms to avoid repetition). ▪ the adequacy and appropriacy of the vocabulary (e.g. topic-specific items, indicators of writer’s attitude). ▪ the precision of word choice and expression. ▪ the control and use of collocations, idiomatic expressions and sophisticated phrasing. ▪ the density and communicative effect of errors in spelling. ▪ the density and communicative effect of errors in word formation. ▪ GRAMMATICAL RANGE AND ACCURACY (GRA) This criterion refers to the range and accurate use of the candidate’s grammatical resource via the candidate’s writing at sentence level. The GRA criterion assesses: ▪ the range and appropriacy of structures used in a given response (e.g. simple, compound and complex sentences). ▪ the accuracy of simple, compound and complex sentences. ▪ the density and communicative effect of grammatical errors. ▪ the accurate and appropriate use of punctuation.

Band descriptors - <https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/ielts-web-static/production/Guides/ielts-writing-band-descriptors.pdfLevel>

**LEVEL 6- Descriptors**

**Achievement**

The response focuses on the requirements of the task and an appropriate format is used.

(Academic) Key features which are selected are covered and adequately highlighted. A relevant overview is attempted. Information is appropriately selected and supported using figures/data.

(General Training) All bullet points are covered and adequately highlighted. The purpose is generally clear. There may be minor inconsistencies in tone.

Some irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate information may occur in areas of detail or when illustrating or extending the main points.

Some details may be missing (or excessive) and further extension or illustration may be needed.

**Coherence and Cohesion**

Information and ideas are generally arranged coherently and there is a clear overall progression.

Cohesive devices are used to some good effect but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical due to misuse, overuse or omission.

The use of reference and substitution may lack flexibility or clarity and result in some repetition or error

**Lexical Resource**

The resource is generally adequate and appropriate for the task.

The meaning is generally clear in spite of a rather restricted range or a lack of precision in word choice.

If the writer is a risk-taker, there will be a wider range of vocabulary used but higher degrees of inaccuracy or inappropriacy.

There are some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but these do not impede communication.

**Grammatical Range and Accuracy**

A mix of simple and complex sentence forms is used but flexibility is limited.

Examples of more complex structures are not marked by the same level of accuracy as in simple structures.

Errors in grammar and punctuation occur, but rarely impede communication

**Speaking** - Examiners use assessment criteria to award a score for each of the following four areas, 3 parts (11-14 minutes, 25% of score):

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

IELTS Speaking Key Assessment Criteria There are nine bands and four criteria: Fluency and Coherence; Lexical Resource; Grammatical Range and Accuracy; and Pronunciation. 1. Fluency and Coherence This refers to the ability to talk with normal levels of continuity, rate and effort, and to link ideas and language together to form coherent, connected speech. Key indicators of fluency ▪ speech rate: ideally, not too slow (hard to keep links between words/propositions in mind) ▪ speech continuity: ideally, flow of speech will not be excessively interrupted by false starts, backtracking, functionless repetitions of words and phrases, and/or pausing during which the test taker searches for words. Key indicators of coherence ▪ logical sequencing of ‘spoken sentences’\* ▪ clear marking (with appropriate use of pausing, and spoken discourse markers and fillers) of stages in a discussion, narration or argument ▪ relevance of spoken sentences to the general purpose of a turn ▪ use of cohesive devices within and between spoken sentences (e.g., logical connectors, pronouns and conjunctions). \*A ‘spoken sentence’ is the unit of speech which most closely corresponds to a written sentence. It is usually the same as a simple or complex written sentence, but may also include verbless structures, sometimes involving ellipsis, which perform a sentence like function but lack elements which would be found in acceptable writing. Such units will usually be further distinguished by a pause at the end, which may be very brief, and ‘final’ intonation, typically a pitch fall. 2. Lexical Resource This refers to the range of vocabulary at the test taker’s disposal, which will influence the range of topics which they can discuss, and the precision with which meanings are expressed and attitudes conveyed. Key indicators of lexical resource ▪ variety of words used ▪ adequacy and appropriacy of vocabulary in relation to the requirements of: ▪ referential meaning (the correct labelling of things and concepts) ▪ style (formal/informal) ▪ collocation (including idiomatic expressions) ▪ indicating the speaker’s attitude to content (whether favorable, neutral or unfavorable) ▪ ability to use paraphrase (getting round a vocabulary gap by using other words), with or without noticeable hesitation. 3. Grammatical Range and Accuracy This refers to the accurate and appropriate use of syntactic forms in order to meet Speaking test requirements, and to the test taker’s range of grammatical resources, a feature which will help to determine the complexity of propositions which can be expressed. Key indicators of range ▪ the length of spoken sentences ▪ appropriate use of subordinate clauses within clauses and phrases ▪ complexity of the verb phrase (correct use of auxiliaries in continuous/perfect aspect, modality and passive voice) ▪ complexity of other phrases (use of pre- and post-modification: items before and after the head noun/adjective, etc.) ▪ range of sentence structures, especially to move elements around for information focus. Key indicators of accuracy ▪ error density (the number of grammatical errors in a given amount of speech) ▪ the communicative effect of error (its effect on intelligibility and precision or expression). 4. Pronunciation This refers to the accurate and sustained use of a range of phonological features to convey meaningful messages. Key indicators of pronunciation ▪ the ability to divide speech into meaningful utterances or chunks within spoken sentences ▪ the appropriate use of rhythm and stress timing, and the linking of sounds, using features such as elision to produce connected speech ▪ the use of stress (e.g. emphatic/contrastive) and intonation to enhance meaning ▪ the production of sounds at the word and phoneme level (e.g. word stress, vowel and consonant production), and the degree of effort required of the listener to understand these ▪ the overall effect of accent on intelligibility

**Level 6- Descriptors**

**Fluency and coherence**

Pronunciation 6

Able to keep going and demonstrates a willingness to produce long turns.

Coherence may be lost at times as a result of hesitation, repetition and/or self-correction.

Uses a range of spoken discourse markers, connectives and cohesive features though not always appropriately.

**Lexical resource**

Resource sufficient to discuss topics at length.

Vocabulary use may be inappropriate but meaning is clear.

Generally able to paraphrase successfully.

**Grammatical range and accuracy**

Produces a mix of short and complex sentence forms and a variety of structures with limited flexibility.

Though errors frequently occur in complex structures, these rarely impede communication.

**Pronunciation**

Uses a range of phonological features, but control is variable.

Chunking is generally appropriate, but rhythm may be affected by a lack of stress-timing and/or a rapid speech rate.

Some effective use of intonation and stress, but this is not sustained. Individual words or phonemes may be mispronounced but this causes only occasional lack of clarity.

Can generally be understood throughout without much effort.

Sample test questions: <https://ielts.org/take-a-test/preparation-resources/sample-test-questions/academic-test>

**Test Prep books:**

### **1.  Cambridge IELTS 16 Academics Students Books**

Going through authentic test papers gives you a good idea about what to expect in the IELTS test exam. Its most updated version is aimed at IELTS Academic students containing 4 tests with section-wise answers. Attempting the papers and their solutions is invaluable for you in preparation.

**Why consider?**

* Good tips divided into each section
* Explanation for each question type to prepare well
* Contains a lot of detail.

### **2.  Barron's IELTS Superpack**

As the name suggests, Super pack it comes with all the vital IELTS study materials in a single package which is required to qualify for the exam. With an extensive set of best books for IELTS listening to techniques & strategies, you will find practice modules, test papers, strategies and CDs in it. It also contains an extensive list of 600 words to strengthen your vocabulary for the exam.

**Why consider?**

* Study material is comprehensive.
* Its packs of CDs make learning more interesting even when you are not interested in reading. You can listen to the audio to improve your IELTS listening test.

### **3.  Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS**

The Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS is among the best IELTS books for general training and academic studies. This book provides you with strategies, insights and guidance from the high achiever students with clear explanations to score good marks. You will also boost your understanding through its eight practice papers and step-by-step guide for each section. Also, it contains videos and audio for each practice test and the listening questions.

Why to Consider?

* Provides a glimpse of mistakes you can't do during your IELTS preparation
* Pointers from appearing students who have cleared the test
* Enables you to prepare well with its speaking and listening sections with CDs.

### **4.  Official IELTS Practice Materials**

This practice material is prepared by official examination partners and explains how every section has been examined, with some valuable tips for preparation. You will receive practice papers covering academic and general training sections, answer sheets, tape scripts, feedback and a lot more to study. It is also best for IELTS teachers who are guiding students to crack the test.

**Why Consider?**

* Feedback from official examiners helps you to prepare better.
* Not only best for students but also a good resource for IELTS teachers as well.

### **5.  IELTS Trainers**

The IELTS trainer book contains 6 full practice papers that will assist you in securing success in the examination. Being considered as one of the best books for IELTS preparation, it offers ample guidance to students. Also contain CDs for your listening test and other portions with different answers and guidance on how to tackle them.

**Why Consider?**

* Thorough answers and tips for every question.
* Good samples for speaking, writing and listening tests.
* Step by step guide for every type of question.

### **6.  Mometrix IELTS Books for General Academic Training**

This is the best book for IELTS writing and general training, especially if you are looking for some quality video tutorials with detailed explanations and practice test examinations along with tips and strategies. This book covers all four sections of IELTS with video tutorials to master the topics and is very affordable.

**Why Consider?**

* Explained answer keys with practice papers
* Step-by-step video tutorials which help in mastering complex topics as well
* Thorough review of each section.

### **7.  IELTS English Vocabulary**

IELTS English Vocabulary is considered the best book for IELTS reading, guiding you with a lot of new words and strengthening your vocabulary. Has a wider range of vocabulary sections and is ideal for both general and academics. This book is best suited for those who are in the middle phase and starting their preparation to get a command of English.

**Why Consider?**

* Helps you to Ace IELTS paper with improvement in your vocabulary.

### **8.  IELTS Foundation: Coursebook**

Provides you with a solid foundation in language skills and capabilities required to score better. It contains numerous interesting study materials and texts, an important question bank, tips and strategies, DIY learning projects and listening CDs to prepare better.

**Why Consider?**

* Comes with CD and best study materials.
* Can be a better alternative to enhance your language requirements outside of IELTS.

### **9.  Simon Braveman's Target Band 7**

If you want to score high for your dream university, then this one is the best book for you both in terms of the best book for IELTS reading and the best book for IELTS writing. It is written by top professionals who have secured the best score in their examinations. Also, it contains some straight-to-the-point strategies to conquer every section without any hurdles.

**Why Consider?**

* Helps you in managing your time effectively and efficiently.
* Solutions students get while solving questions in the examination.

[**https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/15-best-ielts-preparation-books-2023-universal-dream-services/**](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/15-best-ielts-preparation-books-2023-universal-dream-services/)

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