

**Open up
a world of
opportunity**



Your guide to

IELTS



Welcome to your step-by-step guide to IELTS. It contains the key things you need to know about the test, so you feel confident and fully prepared for test day.

Ready for the next step into your future? Read on – we're here to help you succeed on your IELTS journey.

Your potential, your future

IELTS is the International English Language Testing System, designed to assess and award your ability to study, work, and succeed where English is spoken. With IELTS, your potential is recognised and valued by thousands of organisations around the world: universities, employers, professional bodies, immigration authorities, government agencies, and more.



Recognised
by over **13,500**
organisations
worldwide

For a full list of possibilities, visit [IELTS.org/Who-Accepts-IELTS](https://ielts.org/Who-Accepts-IELTS)

Your globally trusted English language test

IELTS is produced and developed by some of the world's leading experts in language assessment. This means you can be confident that your test score reflects your true level of English language ability. Every year millions of people trust IELTS to take their first step into a world of opportunity. Where will IELTS take you?



Every year
millions of
people take IELTS

About the test

There are two IELTS tests to choose from, depending on your needs – Academic or General Training. We recommend you check directly with the institution or organisation you are applying to to see which test you need to take.

Choose the right test for you

Level	Academic	Training
study at undergraduate or postgraduate level	Yes	No
train or study at below degree level	Yes	Yes
register with a professional body	Yes	No
migrate to an English-speaking country*	Yes	Yes

*Find out more about IELTS for UK Visas and Immigration at [IELTS/UnitedKingdom](#)

About the test sections

IELTS has four sections – Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking.

The total time for the four sections is **2 hours and 45 minutes**.



You take the Listening, Reading, and Writing tests **on the same day, with no breaks in between them**.



Your Speaking test may take place on the **same day as the other tests or up to a week before or after the other tests**. If you take IELTS Online (IELTS Academic test only), your Speaking test will usually take place before your other tests.

You take your Speaking test face-to-face or via video call with one of our friendly and highly trained IELTS Examiners.

Choose how and where to take IELTS

IELTS gives you choice and flexibility in how and where you take your test. You can decide which option works best for you.

IELTS in a test centre



We have test centres in over 4,000 locations across the world.

You will sit your IELTS test on a computer at your own desk in a test centre.



In selected markets, we offer an IELTS on computer (Writing on Paper) option. This is where your writing tasks are provided on screen, but you write your answers on an answer sheet with a pen.

IELTS Online



You can take IELTS Online (IELTS Academic test only) in your own home or a suitable private location with a stable internet connection. The test has the same format as IELTS taken at a test centre.

The Speaking test is completed in an online video call with one of our friendly and highly trained IELTS Examiners.

Find out how and where you can book your IELTS test at [IELTS.org/How-To-Register](https://ielts.org/How-To-Register)

Access arrangements

We have a wide range of services to make sure IELTS is fair for everyone. We can provide support for certain medical conditions, hearing and visual impairments, and specific learning difficulties. If you need any access arrangements, such as extra time or a modified version of the test, please make sure you let your test centre know at least six weeks before your test.

Learn more about access arrangements at [IELTS.org/Access-Arrangements](https://ielts.org/Access-Arrangements)



Your four-skills test

IELTS tests all four language skills in separate sections. Here's a simple guide to what you can expect:

Listening | 30 minutes*

You will listen to four recorded texts – two monologues and two conversations.

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

Part 1: A conversation between two people set in an everyday social context, e.g. a conversation in an accommodation agency.

Part 2: A monologue set in an everyday social context, e.g. a speech about local facilities.

Part 3: A conversation between up to four people set in an educational or training context, e.g. a university tutor and a student discussing an assignment.

Part 4: A monologue on an academic subject, e.g. a university lecture.

There are 40 questions. A variety of different question types are used.

Reading | 60 minutes*

IELTS Academic – three sections

- For each section you will be given one long reading passage with tasks.
- All the topics are of general interest to students at undergraduate or postgraduate level.
- The texts may be written in different styles and may contain diagrams, graphs, or illustrations.
- The texts will come from a variety of sources (e.g. books, journals, newspapers).

There are 40 questions. A variety of different question types are used.

IELTS General Training – three sections

You will be presented with five or six texts of varying length with tasks.

- Section 1: contains two or three short texts or several shorter texts on everyday topics.
- Section 2: contains two short, work-related, factual texts.
- Section 3: contains one longer text on a topic of general interest.
- The texts will come from a variety of sources (e.g. advertisements, company handbooks, official documents, books, newspapers).

There are 40 questions. A variety of different question types are used.



"IELTS opened doors to a new country, endless learning opportunities, and the chance to meet diverse individuals from around the world ... I have now successfully graduated and got myself placed in a good job to create a brighter future for myself and my family."

Vineetha Deepak Karira

Writing | 60 minutes

IELTS Academic Task 1: You are given a graph, table, chart, or diagram and are asked to describe the visual information in your own words.

You are asked to write at least 150 words in about 20 minutes.

IELTS General Training Task 1: You respond to a situation, for example, by writing a letter asking for information or explaining a situation.

You are asked to write at least 150 words in about 20 minutes.

IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training Task 2: You are given a point of view, argument or problem which you need to discuss.

You are asked to write at least 250 words in about 40 minutes.

Speaking | 11-14 minutes

Part 1 (4-5 minutes): The Examiner asks you general questions

about yourself and a range of familiar topics, such as home, family, work, studies, and interests.

Part 2 (3-4 minutes): You will be given a card which asks you to talk about a topic. You will have 1 minute to prepare before speaking for up to 2 minutes. The Examiner may then ask one or two questions on the same topic.

Part 3 (4-5 minutes): The Examiner asks more questions that are connected to the topic of Part 2. These questions give you an opportunity to discuss more abstract issues and ideas.

Top tips for preparing for your test

We want to help you succeed, so we have a wide range of preparation materials and resources to support you:



1

Familiarise yourself with the test format

Learn more about each section of IELTS and get to know the test format in more detail:

Learn more about IELTS Academic at [**IELTS.org/Academic-Test**](https://ielts.org/Academic-Test)

Learn more about IELTS General Training at [**IELTS.org/General-Training-Test**](https://ielts.org/General-Training-Test).

2

Use our free preparation resources

On our website you can find lots of helpful resources. From apps, videos, and webinars to books, articles, and courses the IELTS Partners have everything you need to succeed.

Find preparation resources at [**IELTS.org/Prepare**](https://ielts.org/Prepare).

3

Practise using sample questions

We have different sample tasks available for IELTS which will help you become confident with the test format, so you know what to expect on test day.

You can also find sample answer sheets for the IELTS on computer (Writing on paper) option, and information on how to complete them on [**IELTS.org**](https://ielts.org)

Sign up for a preparation course

4

IELTS test centres and language schools around the world offer IELTS preparation courses to help improve your performance in the test.

Find a test centre: [**IELTS.org/Test-Centres**](https://ielts.org/Test-Centres)

What to expect on test day

If you feel ready and know what to expect, you'll be confident and more relaxed on test day. Here are just a few of our top tips to help you perform at your best:

- ✓ **Be prepared:**
Double-check the date, time, and location of your test.
- ✓ **Follow the instructions:**
Read each question carefully so you fully understand what it's asking you to do.
- ✓ **Watch the time:**
Some questions have suggested time limits to help you, so try and stick to them.
- ✓ **Relax:**
You've read all our guidance and you're fully prepared, so now you can take your test with confidence.

Read our full list of top tips at [IELTS.org/On-Test-Day](https://ielts.org/On-Test-Day)



Your results

You prepared for IELTS, you took the test, and now you're just waiting for your results. So what happens next?

Your IELTS score

Your result will be reported on a 9-band scale from 1 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest). All formats of IELTS use the same scoring system. Learn more about how IELTS is scored at [IELTS.org/Scores](https://ielts.org/Scores)

Receiving your results

You won't have to wait long to receive your results. The timing depends on which type of test you took:

IELTS on computer: 1–5 days after your test

IELTS on computer (Writing on Paper): 1-5 days after your test

IELTS Online: 6–8 days after your test

Band	Level	Description
9	Expert	Has fully operational command of the language. Use of English is appropriate, accurate, and fluent, and shows complete understanding.
8	Very good	Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriate usage. May misunderstand some things in unfamiliar situations. They handle complex and detailed argumentation well.
7	Good	Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriate usage, and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handle complex language well and understand detailed reasoning.
6	Competent	Has an effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriate usage, and misunderstandings. Can use and understand reasonably complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
5	Modest	Has a partial command of the language and copes with overall meaning in most situations, although they are likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in their own field.
4	Limited	Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Frequently show problems in understanding and expression.
3	Extremely limited	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication.
2	Intermittent	No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.
1	Non-user	Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.
0	Did not attempt the test	No assessable information provided.

Confirming your results

We'll send you an IELTS Test Report Form (TRF) as official confirmation and proof of your test results. It will either be a paper copy or a digital version (eTRF), and will look like this:

IELTS™

Test Report Form

NOTE

IELTS ACADEMIC

Centre Number

GB250

Test Date

01/01/2027

Candidate Number

999999

Candidate Details

Family Name

CHEN

First Name(s)

MIN

Candidate ID

123456789

Date of Birth

01/01/2000

Sex

F

Scheme Code

Private Candidate

Country or Region of Origin

Country of Nationality

ALBANIA

First Language

ARABIC

Test Results

Listening

9.0

Reading

9.0

Writing

9.0

Speaking

9.0

Overall Band Score

9.0

CEFR Level

C2

Administrator Comments

Centre Stamp

Validation Stamp

Administrator's Signature

Issue Date

02/01/2027

Test Report Form Number

123456789012345678

BRITISH COUNCIL

idp

CAMBRIDGE English

IELTS is jointly owned by the British Council, IDP IELTS, and Cambridge University Press and Assessment

The validity of this IELTS Test Report Form can be verified online by recognising organisations at [IELTS.org/verify](#)

Sharing your results

It's easy to share your IELTS Test Report Form with the organisations you want to apply to. They will be able to verify your results using our IELTS Results Service.

Retaking your test

To help you feel confident going into your IELTS test, we've developed IELTS One Skill Retake.

If you didn't show your full potential in one of the four skills (listening, reading, writing, or speaking), IELTS One Skill Retake can help you get back on track. Learn more at [IELTS.org/IELTS-One-Skill-Retake](#).

If you prefer, you can retake the whole test when you feel ready.

Learn more about receiving and sharing your results at [IELTS.org/Results](#)

11

I dream I believe



I am here to *achieve*

British Council
1 Redman Place
Stratford, London,
E20 1JQ
United Kingdom
takeielts.org

**IDP: IDP Education
Limited**
Melbourne Quarter
(Tower 2)
Level 10, 697 Collins St
Docklands, Victoria
3008, Australia
ielts.idp.com

**Cambridge University
Press & Assessment**
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge, CB2 8EA
United Kingdom
cambridgeenglish.org

IELTS USA
570 Broad Street
Suite 1003, Newark,
NJ 07102, USA
ielts@ieltsusa.org

IELTS is jointly owned by the British Council; IDP IELTS; and
Cambridge University Press & Assessment.



CAMBRIDGE
English

© 2026 Cambridge University Press & Assessment



* 8723028999 *