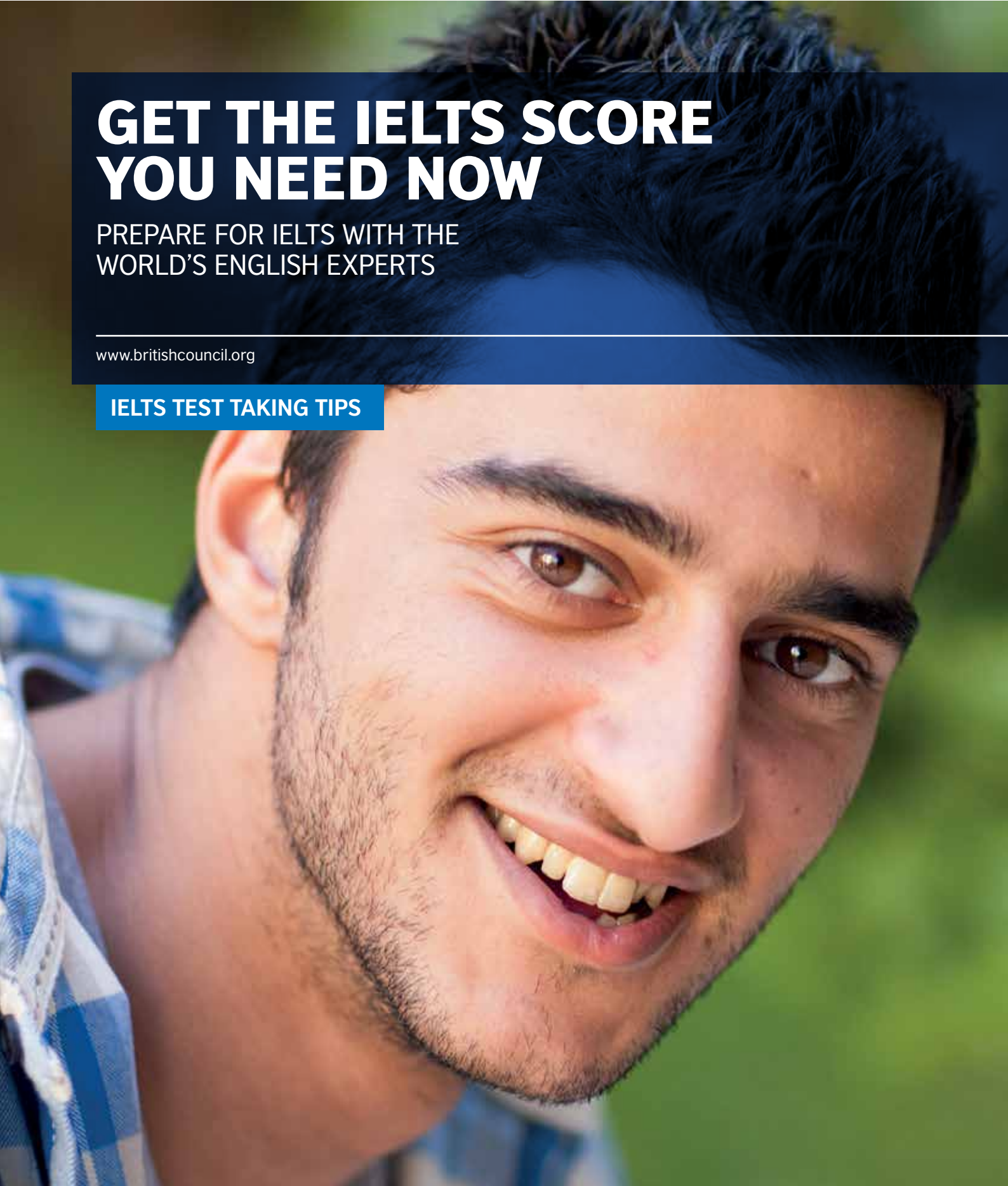


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**IELTS TEST TAKING TIPS**



## LISTENING

- Be familiar with the question types. Go to [learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/ielts](http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/ielts) for more test practise online!
- Practice Listening attentively and concentrating for a full 30 minutes.
- Read instructions carefully, don't just glance at them. They are not always the same as in practise or previous tests.
- If you do not know the answer to a Listening question, try to answer with your best guess. Incomplete or blank answers will not receive a mark.
- Do not exceed the word limit or your answer will be marked incorrect
- Practice Listening to different English accents as the speakers will use Australian, British and North American accents.
- Try and anticipate what the speaker will say. This requires concentration - easy in your own language, but more difficult in English.
- Remember if you want a high score you should aim to get all questions in parts one and two correct. Don't make any careless mistakes in the easier sections.
- Small errors can lead to low score such as bad spelling or omitting an 's'.
- Don't panic if you think the topic is too difficult or the speaker is too fast. Relax and tune in.
- Read, write and listen at the same time. Tricky but you can do it with practise!
- If the answer is plural, then do not write the singular form. Remembers 'birds' is not the same as bird.
- Ensure that you include items such as currency symbols where necessary.
- Always check your answers when transferring them. You can easily lose marks.
- Matching: The questions are in the order of the recording, but the answer choices for one question may not be. So skim the answers when Reading through the questions.
- Matching: Listen to the entire question and information before making an answer choice so that you do not choose a response that has incomplete information.
- Map Labelling: Make quick notes or drawings to organize the information and avoid forgetting any important information.
- Short Answer: The speaker will give you the exact word (s) you need to write down. There is no need to alter them to fit the passage.
- Table completion: Listen to the whole passage carefully as there may be additional information added to throw you off.
- Multiple Choice: As you listen to the recording, cross out answers that you know are wrong. Don't choose an answer just because you hear

the same words as in the question. It is important to know what the question is asking and what the answer means as a whole.

- Often the speaker will give you an answer and then correct themselves - watch out for this. It's a common trick.

## WRITING

- Write clearly so the grader can read your paper easily.
- Try to determine how many lines a 150 or 250 word response will take on the paper when preparing for your IELTS Writing test so that you know roughly how many words you have written during the test.
- Become familiar with your common grammar and other Writing mistakes so you know what to look out for when checking your answers.
- When planning, underline key words and then place points or vocabulary under them to help you develop your answer. Don't worry if you don't understand every word of the Reading—it is more important that you are aware of the topic and how it is developed in the text.
- We recommend that you break down your time as follows: 10 minutes to plan, 15 minutes for Task 1, 30 minutes for Task 2, 5 minutes to check. Whatever time portions you choose, make sure you keep track so you do not run out of time.
- Task 1: Use vocabulary (formal or more informal) that is appropriate for the person you are writing to.
- Task 1: If asked to describe the process of a diagram, identify all the stages to keep your paragraph organized and complete. Use the correct transitions to present your answer in an organized manner.
- Task 2: Make sure you give your own view clearly and support it effectively. Task 2: Have a strong, organized structure to support your position.
- Task 2: When using examples from your own experiences, try not to make it too personal.
- Task 2: Indent your paragraphs or leave a line between paragraphs. Give structure to each paragraph with a topic sentence, transitions and supporting ideas. While paying attention to structure, it is more important to answer the question.
- Leave time to proof read. Practice tests and Writing exercises should help you understand what your weaknesses are, so you can keep an eye out for mistakes when you go back and proof read your work.
- Do not get stuck on making each sentence perfect because you have a limited amount of time. It is more important to present an overall strong response rather than have an incomplete paper of perfect sentences.
- Highlight/circle key words.

- Don't repeat ideas in a different way and stick to the same topic throughout.
- Paragraph simply with one idea in each paragraph and clearly divide paragraphs.
- Avoid informal language.
- Get used to always spending several minutes re-reading and correcting your essays.
- Don't memorise model answers, they won't fit the question and you will make more careless mistakes.

## SPEAKING

- Speak, listen and read in English before the test, so you are "thinking in English" when you go into the Speaking test.
- Try to use a wide range of grammar and vocabulary during the test. The examiner can only assess you on the language you use.
- Don't worry if the examiner stops you before you have finished by saying, "Thank you". The test is carefully timed and the timings for each part must be followed by the examiner.
- Use a variety of words to express opinion - in my opinion, I think, I feel.
- In Part 2 of the test, it is important to make notes. Structure your 2 minute talk with headings and keywords under those headings. Use the preparation time to make notes on what you plan to say so you don't forget.
- Look at example questions, and try and group similar answers and test yourself.
- You are marked on pronunciation. One thing can help is correct intonation. Try not to be too monotonous.
- Give a reason when expressing like or dislike. I enjoy my job because... or I like doing this as..
- Just as in Writing, give support and examples for your opinions.
- Don't speak too fast because it is difficult to follow. Don't speak too slowly as you won't be able to say very much. Keep a mental track of time.
- Use fillers such as "Well", "So", "Let me see" to give yourself time to prepare what you will say without pausing too much.
- The areas covered are fairly predictable and not infinite so practise at home recording ideas onto a tape recorder.
- When you record your voice and listen to it, it tests your ability to communicate effectively not just your grammatical accuracy.
- Don't learn chunks of answers. The examiner is trained to spot this and will change the question.
- Develop your answers as much as possible.
- Remember it is not a test of knowledge and there is no single answer, but ensure that you give your opinion. Don't worry if you feel it is not sophisticated enough.

## READING

- Read the titles of all of the Readings first, this may help you decide which to go with first.
- Underline key words, names or numbers from the question as you read through the passage so the information is easy to locate.
- Read instructions for each task thoroughly and make sure to follow them. Pay attention to the maximum number of words you may use in your answer.
- Transfer answers as you go because you will not be given additional time to do so.
- Be prepared for the text and questions to get more difficult as you progress.
- Don't leave any answers blank. There isn't a penalty for wrong answers. Just guess based on the evidence.
- Get a stopwatch and time yourself with different passages, skim, write down the keywords and then see if you got the gist.
- You should spend around 20 minutes completing the answers to each of the three texts so don't spend too much time on any one question. Come back to more difficult questions after you answer ones you know better.
- Review the glossary to find out meanings of technical terms. They will make the text and questions clearer.
- Identifying the writer's claims and views: Distinguish between "No" and "Not given". The first is saying the statement is wrong. The second is saying there is no information.
- Where you have to write words, check spelling carefully (the word(s) will always be in the text) and make sure you do not write more than the maximum word limit for that question type.
- Keep a notebook of English words you learn and review daily.
- Do not try to read too deeply into the questions. It could cause you to over analyse and make incorrect inferences.
- Practice skim Reading effectively, picking up important information and making a map in your head of what information is where in the passage. It helps to underline key words as you go or make notes on the side of the text.
- Leave a question if you can't answer. To spend a long time on one answer is disastrous. Go back later if you have time and guess if you have too.
- Don't panic if you don't know anything about the passage. All the answers are in the passage and you don't need any specialist knowledge.
- Try and predict content of paragraph from the opening sentence and look also at ways paragraphs are organised.
- Careless mistakes cost many marks. Copy the answer correctly if it is in the passage.
- Leave time to proof read. Through practice tests and Writing you should become familiar with your weaknesses so you can watch out for them while you check.





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## PRICING

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