

IELTS Preparation Course

Scheme of Work

Academic IELTS · 30 weeks · one 60-minute lesson per week

Course overview

Course title	IELTS Preparation Course (Academic)
Duration	30 weeks (30 contact hours)
Lesson length	1 × 60 minutes per week
Test version	Academic (see the adaptation note for General Training)
Recommended entry level	CEFR B1+ (intermediate)
Target outcome	Band 6.0–7.0 (adjust to learners' own goals)
Primary focus	Writing (Tasks 1 and 2), followed by Reading, Listening and Speaking

Course aims

By the end of the course, learners will have:

- become familiar with the format, timing and demands of all four IELTS components;
- developed their writing as the central priority, covering both Task 1 and Task 2 in depth;
- built the exam techniques and time-management strategies needed under test conditions;
- extended the range and accuracy of the vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the test;
- developed the ability to assess their own work against the official band descriptors.

Approach and rationale

Writing is generally the component in which candidates find it hardest to raise their band, so this programme front-loads it across the first sixteen weeks — eight weeks on Task 1 and eight on Task 2. Reading, Listening and Speaking then follow in focused blocks. Throughout these later phases, writing is kept active through weekly homework so that earlier gains are consolidated rather than lost. The final week draws all four skills together in a full mock-test review.

Each one-hour lesson is designed to introduce a focused skill, model it, and give learners guided practice, with the substantial written practice completed independently between lessons and returned with feedback.

Assessment

- Weekly homework, with writing tasks marked against the four IELTS criteria and returned with individual feedback;

- regular timed practice under exam conditions from Week 8 onwards;
- full-skill practice tests (Reading in Week 21, Listening in Week 26, and a complete mock test before Week 30);
- ongoing self- and peer-assessment using simplified band descriptors.

Resources

- the official Cambridge IELTS practice-test series (authentic past papers);
- the publicly available IELTS Writing band descriptors for Task 1 and Task 2;
- a bank of authentic graphs, charts, process diagrams and maps for Task 1;
- sample essays at a range of band scores for analysis;
- audio materials for listening practice and a means for learners to record their speaking;
- a learner vocabulary log for recording topic vocabulary and collocations.

Note on Academic and General Training

This scheme is written for the Academic test. To adapt it for General Training, replace the Task 1 content in Weeks 2–8 with letter writing — formal, semi-formal and informal letters — covering purpose, register, tone and the conventions of opening and closing a letter. Task 2 essay writing remains the same. Listening and Speaking are identical across both versions; General Training Reading uses more everyday texts but draws on the same question types, so the reading strategies in Weeks 17–21 still apply.

Weekly scheme of work

The thirty weeks are grouped into five teaching phases. Writing leads the course and continues as homework once the other skills are introduced.

Phase 1 · Foundations and Academic Writing Task 1 (Weeks 1–8)

Week	Focus	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Independent study
1	Course introduction & diagnostic assessment	- Describe the format of the four IELTS components and the 0–9 band scale - Explain how the Writing paper is marked against its four criteria - Identify personal strengths, weaknesses and a target band	- Course overview, expectations and the writing-first approach - Presentation of the test format and timings - Introduction to the Writing band descriptors (Task Achievement/Response, Coherence & Cohesion, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range & Accuracy) - Short diagnostic writing task and individual goal-setting	Complete a full diagnostic essay; read the public Writing band descriptors.
2	Writing Task 1: format & the overview	- Identify the requirements of Academic Task 1 (minimum 150 words, 20 minutes) - Structure a response: introduction, overview and detailed paragraphs - Write a clear overview summarising the main trends or features	- Analyse a model line-graph response and label its structure - Paraphrase the prompt to write an introduction - Guided practice writing overview statements - Common mistakes: copying the prompt, omitting the overview, adding opinions	Write an introduction and overview for a given chart.
3	Writing Task 1: line graphs & describing trends	- Use a range of vocabulary to describe rises, falls and stable trends - Select appropriate verb tenses for the time period shown - Describe the degree and speed of change accurately	- Vocabulary of change: verbs and nouns (increase, surge, decline, plummet) - Modifying adverbs and adjectives (sharply, gradually, a steady rise) - Transforming verb forms into noun forms and vice versa - Guided description of a line graph with two or more lines	Full line-graph Task 1 under timed conditions (20 minutes).
4	Writing Task 1: bar charts & tables	- Select and group key features rather than listing every figure - Make accurate comparisons between categories - Use comparative and superlative structures correctly	- Identifying significant and noteworthy features - Language of comparison and contrast - Expressing proportions, fractions and approximations - Organising data logically into paragraphs	Bar-chart or table Task 1 under timed conditions.

Week	Focus	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Independent study
5	Writing Task 1: pie charts & proportions	- Describe and compare proportions and percentages - Use a varied range of expressions for proportion - Compare data across two or more pie charts	- Language of proportion (a quarter, the majority, a significant share) - Precise versus approximate figures - Comparing pie charts that show change over time - Avoiding repetition of 'percentage' and 'proportion'	Pie-chart Task 1 under timed conditions.
6	Writing Task 1: process diagrams	- Describe the stages of a process in the correct sequence - Use the passive voice appropriately - Use a range of sequencing connectors	- Sequencing language (firstly, subsequently, after this, finally) - Forming and using the passive voice - Natural and manufactured processes - Adapting the structure where there are no trends to overview	Process-diagram Task 1 under timed conditions.
7	Writing Task 1: maps & changes over time	- Describe the changes between two maps of the same place - Use language of location, direction and development - Select tenses to match past, present or future change	- Language of location (to the north of, adjacent to, on the outskirts) - Verbs of development (was demolished, was converted into, was relocated) - Organising a comparison of 'before' and 'after'	Map Task 1 under timed conditions.
8	Writing Task 1: consolidation & timed practice	- Plan and write any Task 1 type within 20 minutes - Self-assess a response using the band descriptors - Identify and correct recurring personal errors	- Choosing the right approach for each visual type - Quick planning techniques - Full Task 1 written under exam conditions - Peer assessment using a simplified mark scheme	Two Task 1 responses of different types; written error reflection.

Phase 2 · Academic Writing Task 2 (Weeks 9–16)

Week	Focus	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Independent study
9	Writing Task 2: essay structure & question types	- Identify the requirements of Task 2 (minimum 250 words, 40 minutes) - Recognise the five common question types - Plan a clear four- or five-paragraph essay	- Overview of question types (opinion, discussion, advantages/disadvantages, problem/solution, two-part) - Standard essay structure and the role of each paragraph - Analysing the question to identify exactly what is asked - Why Task 2 carries greater weight than Task 1	Identify the type and task of five essay questions; plan one essay.
10	Writing Task 2: opinion (agree/disagree) essays	- Write a clear thesis statement that answers the question - Maintain a consistent position throughout - Support opinions with reasons and relevant examples	- Interpreting 'to what extent do you agree?' - One-sided and balanced approaches - Writing thesis statements, topic sentences and conclusions - Developing ideas with explanation and example	Full opinion essay under timed conditions (40 minutes).
11	Writing Task 2: discussion essays	- Present two contrasting views clearly and fairly - Give and justify a personal opinion - Balance the discussion across body paragraphs	- Structuring 'discuss both views and give your opinion' - Presenting others' views objectively - Integrating a personal opinion without contradiction	Full discussion essay under timed conditions.
12	Writing Task 2: advantages & disadvantages essays	- Identify and explain advantages and disadvantages - Answer the precise question (e.g. whether advantages outweigh disadvantages) - Structure the essay logically	- Recognising the variants of this question type 'Outweigh' essays versus straightforward discussion - Cause-and-effect and concession language	Full advantages/disadvantages essay under timed conditions.
13	Writing Task 2: problem & solution essays	- Analyse the causes and effects of a problem - Propose realistic, well-developed solutions - Link problems and solutions coherently	- Problem–cause–solution structures - Language for proposing and evaluating solutions - Keeping solutions relevant and specific	Full problem/solution essay under timed conditions.

Week	Focus	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Independent study
14	Writing Task 2: two-part (direct) questions	- Identify and answer both parts of the question - Allocate paragraphs appropriately to each part - Achieve a full and balanced task response	- Recognising two-part question prompts - Planning to address both questions fully - Avoiding an under-developed second answer	Full two-part question essay under timed conditions.
15	Writing Task 2: coherence & cohesion	- Use a range of cohesive devices accurately and naturally - Write unified paragraphs with clear central topics - Use referencing and substitution to avoid repetition	- Linking language for addition, contrast, cause, result and example - Avoiding mechanical or overused linkers - Pronoun referencing and logical progression of ideas	Redraft an earlier essay to improve cohesion; one new timed essay.
16	Writing Task 2: lexical resource & grammatical range	- Use topic-specific vocabulary and natural collocations - Produce a range of accurate complex sentence structures - Reduce common grammatical errors	- Topic vocabulary (education, environment, technology, society) - Collocation and precision of word choice - Complex structures (relative, conditional and concession clauses) - Targeted error correction	Full timed essay; begin a topic vocabulary log.

Phase 3 · Reading (Weeks 17–21)

Writing practice continues each week as homework throughout this phase.

Week	Focus	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Independent study
17	Reading: format & core strategies	- Describe the Academic Reading format (3 passages, 40 questions, 60 minutes) - Apply skimming and scanning purposefully - Manage time and answer transfer	- Reading-paper overview and question order - Skimming for gist and scanning for specific information - A time-management plan across the three passages	One timed reading passage; one Task 2 essay.
18	Reading: True/False/Not Given & multiple choice	- Distinguish True, False and Not Given confidently - Explain why a statement is 'Not Given' rather than 'False' - Answer multiple-choice questions accurately	- Strategies for True/False/Not Given and Yes/No/Not Given - Recognising paraphrase and avoiding over-interpretation - Eliminating distractors in multiple-choice items	Mixed practice set; one Task 1 response.
19	Reading: matching tasks	- Match headings to paragraphs using main ideas - Locate specific information within passages - Match features or names to statements	- Distinguishing main ideas from supporting detail - Strategies for matching headings and dealing with extra options - Working efficiently with 'matching information' tasks	Matching-task practice set; one Task 2 essay.
20	Reading: completion tasks	- Complete sentences, summaries, notes and tables within word limits - Predict the word class required - Use grammatical and contextual clues	- Applying word-limit rules precisely - Predicting answers and locating them in the text - Flow-chart and diagram labelling	Completion-task practice set; one Task 1 response.
21	Reading: full practice & time management	- Complete a full reading test within 60 minutes - Prioritise question types effectively - Review and correct answers systematically	- Full timed reading test under exam conditions - Reviewing and analysing errors - Refining a personal pacing strategy	Error analysis; one Task 2 essay.

Phase 4 · Listening (Weeks 22–26)

Writing practice continues each week as homework throughout this phase.

Week	Focus	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Independent study
22	Listening: format & core strategies	- Describe the Listening format (4 sections, 40 questions, around 30 minutes) - Use preparation time to read and predict - Follow signpost language to locate answers	- Listening-paper overview and timing - Predicting answers and answer types - Recognising signposting; handling spellings and numbers	Section 1 listening practice; one Task 1 response.
23	Listening: form, note & table completion	- Complete forms, notes and tables accurately - Handle numbers, dates and spellings under pressure - Observe word limits	- Everyday information (Section 1) and academic notes (Section 4) - Listening for specific detail - Coping with corrections and distractors in speech	Completion practice; one Task 2 essay.
24	Listening: multiple choice & matching	- Answer multiple-choice questions while listening - Match options to speakers or items - Follow conversations involving several speakers	- Single- and multiple-answer multiple-choice questions - Matching tasks - Following opinions, agreement and disagreement	Multiple-choice and matching practice; one Task 1 response.
25	Listening: map, plan & diagram labelling	- Label maps, plans and diagrams accurately - Follow directions and descriptions of location - Track changes within a spoken description	- Language of location and direction in listening - Orientation and following a guided description - Labelling accurately under time pressure	Labelling practice; one Task 2 essay.
26	Listening: full practice & review	- Complete a full listening test - Transfer answers accurately - Identify and target remaining weaknesses	- Full timed listening test under exam conditions - Answer-transfer practice - Common-error analysis	Error analysis; one Task 1 response.

Phase 5 · Speaking and final preparation (Weeks 27–30)

Writing practice continues each week as homework throughout this phase.

Week	Focus	Learning objectives	Lesson activities	Independent study
27	Speaking: Part 1 (introduction & interview)	- Describe the Speaking format (3 parts, 11–14 minutes) and its criteria - Answer familiar-topic questions fluently - Extend short answers with reasons and examples	- Speaking criteria (fluency & coherence, lexical resource, grammar, pronunciation) - Common Part 1 topics and question types - Extending and developing answers; fluency practice	Record and review Part 1 answers; one Task 2 essay.
28	Speaking: Part 2 (long turn / cue card)	- Make effective notes in one minute - Speak for two minutes on a given topic - Structure the long turn coherently	- Cue-card strategy and note-making - Organising the talk and managing timing - Using a range of tenses and descriptive language	Practise two cue cards (recorded); one Task 1 response.
29	Speaking: Part 3 (discussion)	- Discuss abstract ideas linked to the Part 2 topic - Develop and justify opinions - Use functional language for speculating, comparing and evaluating	- Part 3 question types and extended answers - Functional language for opinion and analysis - Handling challenging or unexpected questions	Practise Part 3 questions; one final timed essay.
30	Full mock test review & exam strategies	- Apply strategies across all four skills - Manage exam-day timing and nerves - Set personalised final action points	- Review of a full practice test (completed beforehand) - Timing across the whole exam and exam-day logistics - Individual feedback and personalised action plans	Final independent full practice test; ongoing improvement plan.