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 **12,500** organisations worldwide

For a full list of possibilities, visit 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

I want to:	Academic	General Training
study at undergraduate or postgraduate level	✓	
train or study at below degree level	✓	✓
register with a professional body	✓	
migrate to an English-speaking country*	✓	✓

*Find out more about IELTS for UK Visas and Immigration at **IELTS.org/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 can take your test **on paper** or **on a computer**. The test questions and format are the same. The only difference is the way you give your answers.

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.

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.

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***
Test format	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***
Test format	**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.	

	Reading	60 minutes*
Test format	**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
Test format	**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
Test format	**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.

Answering for Listening, Reading, and Writing

For IELTS on paper you write your answers on an answer sheet. For IELTS on computer and IELTS Online you write them on computer.

*At the end of the Listening test, for IELTS on paper, you have an extra 10 minutes to transfer your answers from the question paper to an answer sheet.
There is no additional time to transfer your answers for the Reading test.

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**.
Learn more about IELTS General Training at **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**.

3

Practise using sample questions

These will help you become confident with the test format so you know what to expect on test day. We have different sample tasks for IELTS on paper and on computer, and for IELTS Online. You can also find sample answer sheets for the different test sections and information on how to complete them.

Familiarise yourself with the way you choose to take your test at **IELTS.org/Sample-Tests**.

4

Sign up for a preparation course

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**.

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.

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.

Band score	Skill 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.

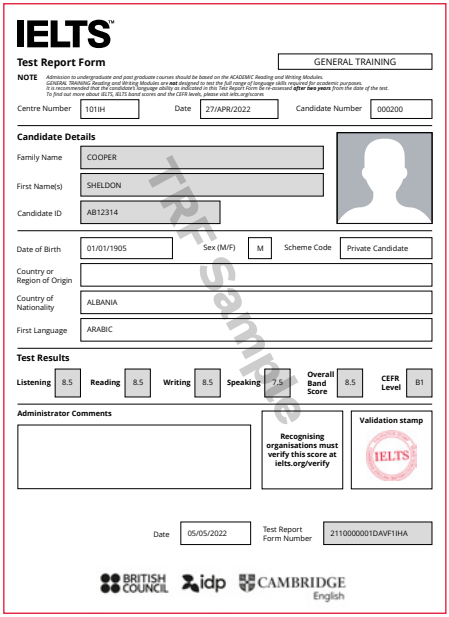
Learn more about how IELTS is scored at **IELTS.org/Scores**.

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 paper: 13 days after your test
IELTS on computer: 1–5 days after your test
IELTS Online: 6–8 days after your test

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 GENERAL TRAINING

NOTE *Admission to undergraduate and post graduate courses should be based on the ACADEMIC Reading and Writing Modules.*
*GENERAL TRAINING Reading and Writing Modules are **not** designed to test the full range of language skills required for academic purposes.*
*It is recommended that the candidate's language ability as indicated in this Test Report Form be re-assessed **after two years** from the date of the test.*
To find out more about IELTS, IELTS band scores and the CEFR levels, please visit ielts.org/scores.

Centre Number 101IH | Date 27/APR/2022 | Candidate Number 000200

Candidate Details

Family Name COOPER
First Name(s) SHELDON
Candidate ID AB12314

Date of Birth 01/01/1905 | Sex (M/F) M | Scheme Code Private Candidate
Country or Region of Origin
Country of Nationality ALBANIA
First Language ARABIC

Test Results

Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall Band Score	CEFR Level
8.5	8.5	8.5	7.5	8.5	B1

Administrator Comments

Recognising organisations must verify this score at ielts.org/verify

Validation stamp IELTS

Date 05/05/2022 | Test Report Form Number 2110000001DAVF1IHA

BRITISH COUNCIL idp CAMBRIDGE English

TRF Sample

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.

I dream
I believe

I am here to
achieve

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

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

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge, CB2 8EA
United Kingdom

IELTS USA
570 Broad Street
Suite 1003, Newark,
NJ 07102, USA

takeielts.org

ielts.idp.com

cambridgeenglish.org

ielts@ieltsusa.org

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

BRITISH COUNCIL idp CAMBRIDGE English

© 2025 Cambridge University Press & Assessment