

IELTS Free Lesson 1: Understanding the Exam

IELTS Foundation Series — Free Lesson 1 of 2

Target: Band 5–6 (CEFR B1)

What is IELTS?

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is an English exam. People take it for university, work, or to move to another country. There are two versions: **Academic** (for university) and **General Training** (for work or immigration). Listening and Speaking are the same for both. Reading and Writing are different.

The Four Parts of the Test

Part	Time	What you do
Listening	About 30 min	Listen to recordings and answer 40 questions.
Reading	60 minutes	Read 3 passages and answer 40 questions.
Writing	60 minutes	Complete 2 tasks — a short report or letter, and an essay.
Speaking	11–14 min	Have a face-to-face conversation with an examiner in 3 parts.

Understanding Your Band Score

IELTS gives you a **band score from 1 to 9**. You get a score for each of the four skills plus an overall band score (the average of all four). Scores can include a .5, e.g. 5.5 or 6.5.

Band	Level	Description
9	Expert	Full command of the language — accurate, fluent, and natural.
7–8	Good / Very good	Occasional errors but handles complex language well.
5–6	Modest / Competent	Can communicate but makes regular mistakes.
1–4	Limited	Difficulty understanding and using English in most situations.

Top Tips for Each Part

Listening

- Read the questions before you listen.
- Write your answer as soon as you hear it.
- Check your spelling at the end.

Reading

- Skim the passage first to get the general idea.
- Scan for keywords when answering questions.
- Spend about 20 minutes per passage.

Writing

- Plan your answer for 2–3 minutes first.
- Answer every part of the question.
- Check you have written enough words.

Speaking

- Speak naturally — don't memorise full answers.
- Give reasons and examples, not just short answers.
- Ask the examiner to repeat if you don't understand.

Exercise 1: True or False?

Write T (True) or F (False).

1. IELTS has four parts: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. _____
2. The Reading and Writing tests are the same for both Academic and General Training. _____
3. IELTS band scores go from 1 to 9. _____
4. In the Listening test, you hear each recording twice. _____
5. Your overall band score is the average of your four skill scores. _____
6. In Speaking, you should memorise full answers before the test. _____

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice

Circle the correct answer.

1. How long is the IELTS Reading test?
A) 30 minutes
B) 45 minutes
C) 60 minutes
D) 90 minutes
2. Which part is the same for both Academic and General Training?
A) Reading
B) Writing
C) Listening
D) Reading and Writing
3. What is the highest possible IELTS band score?
A) 7
B) 8
C) 9
D) 10
4. What should you do before you listen in the Listening test?
A) Write your name
B) Read the questions
C) Check your spelling
D) Close your eyes
5. How long is the IELTS Speaking test?
A) 5–8 minutes
B) 11–14 minutes
C) 20 minutes
D) 30 minutes

Exercise 3: Match the Tip to the Skill

Skills: Listening / Reading / Writing / Speaking. Write the correct skill next to each tip.

1. Skim the passage first to get the general idea. — _____
2. Read the questions before the recording starts. — _____
3. Plan your answer for 2–3 minutes before you write. — _____
4. Give reasons and examples — not just short answers. — _____

5. Scan for keywords when answering questions. — _____

ANSWER KEY — TEACHER USE ONLY

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Exercise 1: True or False

- 1. True
- 2. False (Listening and Speaking are the same; Reading and Writing differ)
- 3. True
- 4. False (in the real exam, you hear each recording once)
- 5. True
- 6. False (natural speech scores better than memorised answers)

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice

- 1. C – 60 minutes
- 2. C – Listening
- 3. C – 9
- 4. B – Read the questions
- 5. B – 11–14 minutes

Exercise 3: Match the Tip

- 1. Reading
- 2. Listening
- 3. Writing
- 4. Speaking
- 5. Reading