



IELTS

ACADEMIC 15

WITH ANSWERS

AUTHENTIC PRACTICE TESTS

Produced by Cambridge Exams Publishing


WITH
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Introduction

Prepare for the exam with practice tests from Cambridge

Inside you'll find four authentic examination papers from Cambridge Assessment English. They are the perfect way to practise – EXACTLY like the real exam.

Why are they unique?

All our authentic practice tests go through the same design process as the IELTS test. We check every single part of our practice tests with real students under exam conditions, to make sure we give you the most authentic experience possible.

Students can practise these tests on their own or with the help of a teacher to familiarise themselves with the exam format, understand the scoring system and practise exam technique.

Further Information

IELTS is jointly managed by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge Assessment English. Further information can be found on the IELTS official website at ielts.org.

WHAT IS THE TEST FORMAT?

IELTS consists of four components. All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking tests. There is a choice of Reading and Writing tests according to whether a candidate is taking the Academic or General Training module.

Academic

For candidates wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels, and for those seeking professional registration.

General Training

For candidates wishing to migrate to an English-speaking country (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK), and for those wishing to train or study below degree level.

The test components are taken in the following order:

Listening	
4 parts, 40 items, approximately 30 minutes	
Academic Reading 3 sections, 40 items 60 minutes	or
General Training Reading 3 sections, 40 items 60 minutes	
Academic Writing 2 tasks 60 minutes	or
General Training Writing 2 tasks 60 minutes	
Speaking 11 to 14 minutes	
Total Test Time 2 hours 44 minutes	

ACADEMIC TEST FORMAT

Listening

This test consists of four parts, each with ten questions. The first two parts are concerned with social needs. The first part is a conversation between two speakers and the second part is a monologue. The final two parts are concerned with situations related to educational or training contexts. The third part is a conversation between up to four people and the fourth part is a monologue.

A variety of question types is used, including: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labelling, form completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, summary completion, sentence completion and short-answer questions.

Candidates hear the recording once only and answer the questions as they listen. Ten minutes are allowed at the end for candidates to transfer their answers to the answer sheet.

Reading

This test consists of three sections with 40 questions. There are three texts, which are taken from journals, books, magazines and newspapers. The texts are on topics of general interest. At least one text contains detailed logical argument.

A variety of question types is used, including: multiple choice, identifying information (True/False/Not Given), identifying the writer's views/claims (Yes/No/Not Given), matching information, matching headings, matching features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, diagram-label completion and short-answer questions.

Introduction

Writing

This test consists of two tasks. It is suggested that candidates spend about 20 minutes on Task 1, which requires them to write at least 150 words, and 40 minutes on Task 2, which requires them to write at least 250 words. Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score.

Task 1 requires candidates to look at a diagram or some data (in a graph, table or chart) and to present the information in their own words. They are assessed on their ability to organise, present and possibly compare data, and are required to describe the stages of a process, describe an object or event, or explain how something works.

In Task 2, candidates are presented with a point of view, argument or problem. They are assessed on their ability to present a solution to the problem, present and justify an opinion, compare and contrast evidence and opinions, and to evaluate and challenge ideas, evidence or arguments.

Candidates are also assessed on their ability to write in an appropriate style. More information on assessing the Writing test, including Writing assessment criteria (public version), is available at ielts.org.

Speaking

This test takes between 11 and 14 minutes and is conducted by a trained examiner. There are three parts:

Part 1

The candidate and the examiner introduce themselves. Candidates then answer general questions about themselves, their home/family, their job/studies, their interests and a wide range of similar familiar topic areas. This part lasts between four and five minutes.

Part 2

The candidate is given a task card with prompts and is asked to talk on a particular topic. The candidate has one minute to prepare and they can make some notes if they wish, before speaking for between one and two minutes. The examiner then asks one or two questions on the same topic.

Part 3

The examiner and the candidate engage in a discussion of more abstract issues which are thematically linked to the topic in Part 2. The discussion lasts between four and five minutes.

The Speaking test assesses whether candidates can communicate effectively in English. The assessment takes into account Fluency and Coherence, Lexical Resource, Grammatical Range and Accuracy, and Pronunciation. More information on assessing the Speaking test, including Speaking assessment criteria (public version), is available at ielts.org.

HOW IS IELTS SCORED?

IELTS results are reported on a nine-band scale. In addition to the score for overall language ability, IELTS provides a score in the form of a profile for each of the four skills (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking). These scores are also reported on a nine-band scale. All scores are recorded on the Test Report Form along with details of the candidate's nationality, first language and date of birth. Each Overall Band Score corresponds to a descriptive statement which gives a summary of the English-language ability of a candidate classified at that level. The nine bands and their descriptive statements are as follows:

- 9 Expert User** – Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
- 8 Very Good User** – Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
- 7 Good User** – Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
- 6 Competent User** – Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
- 5 Modest User** – Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
- 4 Limited User** – Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.
- 3 Extremely Limited User** – Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.
- 2 Intermittent User** – 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.

MARKING THE PRACTICE TESTS

Listening and Reading

The answer keys are on pages 119–126.

Each question in the Listening and Reading tests is worth one mark.

Questions which require letter / Roman numeral answers

- For questions where the answers are letters or Roman numerals, you should write *only* the number of answers required. For example, if the answer is a single letter or numeral you should write only one answer. If you have written more letters or numerals than are required, the answer must be marked wrong.

Questions which require answers in the form of words or numbers

- Answers may be written in upper or lower case.
- Words in brackets are *optional* – they are correct, but not necessary.
- Alternative answers are separated by a slash (/).
- If you are asked to write an answer using a certain number of words and/or (a) number(s), you will be penalised if you exceed this. For example, if a question specifies an answer using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** and the correct answer is 'black leather coat', the answer 'coat of black leather' is *incorrect*.
- In questions where you are expected to complete a gap, you should only transfer the necessary missing word(s) onto the answer sheet. For example, to complete 'in the ...', where the correct answer is 'morning', the answer 'in the morning' would be *incorrect*.
- All answers require correct spelling (including words in brackets).
- Both US and UK spelling are acceptable and are included in the answer key.
- All standard alternatives for numbers, dates and currencies are acceptable.
- All standard abbreviations are acceptable.
- You will find additional notes about individual answers in the answer key.

Writing

The sample answers are on pages 127–137. It is not possible for you to give yourself a mark for the Writing tasks. We have provided sample answers (written by candidates), showing their score and the examiners' comments. These sample answers will give you an insight into what is required for the Writing test.

HOW SHOULD YOU INTERPRET YOUR SCORES?

At the end of each Listening and Reading answer key you will find a chart which will help you assess whether, on the basis of your Practice Test results, you are ready to take the IELTS test.

In interpreting your score, there are a number of points you should bear in mind. Your performance in the real IELTS test will be reported in two ways: there will be a Band Score from 1 to 9 for each of the components and an Overall Band Score from 1 to 9, which is the average of your scores in the four components. However, institutions considering your application are advised to look at both the Overall Band Score and the Band Score for each component in order to determine whether you have the language skills needed for a particular course of study. For example, if your course involves a lot of reading and writing, but no lectures, listening skills might be less important and a score of 5 in Listening might be acceptable if the Overall Band Score was 7. However, for a course which has lots of lectures and spoken instructions, a score of 5 in Listening might be unacceptable even though the Overall Band Score was 7.

Once you have marked your tests, you should have some idea of whether your listening and reading skills are good enough for you to try the IELTS test. If you did well enough in one component, but not in others, you will have to decide for yourself whether you are ready to take the test.

The Practice Tests have been checked to ensure that they are the same level of difficulty as the real IELTS test. However, we cannot guarantee that your score in the Practice Tests will be reflected in the real IELTS test. The Practice Tests can only give you an idea of your possible future performance and it is ultimately up to you to make decisions based on your score.

Different institutions accept different IELTS scores for different types of courses. We have based our recommendations on the average scores which the majority of institutions accept. The institution to which you are applying may, of course, require a higher or lower score than most other institutions.

Test 1

LISTENING

PART 1 Questions 1–10

Complete the notes below.

Write **ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

Bankside Recruitment Agency

- Address of agency: 497 Eastside, Docklands
- Name of agent: Becky 1
- Phone number: 07866 510333
- Best to call her in the 2

Typical jobs

- Clerical and admin roles, mainly in the finance industry
- Must have good 3 skills
- Jobs are usually for at least one 4
- Pay is usually 5 £ per hour

Registration process

- Wear a 6 to the interview
- Must bring your 7 to the interview
- They will ask questions about each applicant's 8

Advantages of using an agency

- The 9 you receive at interview will benefit you
- Will get access to vacancies which are not advertised
- Less 10 is involved in applying for jobs

PART 2 Questions 11–20

Questions 11–14

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B** or **C**.

Matthews Island Holidays

- 11 According to the speaker, the company
- A** has been in business for longer than most of its competitors.
 - B** arranges holidays to more destinations than its competitors.
 - C** has more customers than its competitors.
- 12 Where can customers meet the tour manager before travelling to the Isle of Man?
- A** Liverpool
 - B** Heysham
 - C** Luton
- 13 How many lunches are included in the price of the holiday?
- A** three
 - B** four
 - C** five
- 14 Customers have to pay extra for
- A** guaranteeing themselves a larger room.
 - B** booking at short notice.
 - C** transferring to another date.

Test 1

Questions 15–20

Complete the table below.

Write **ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

Timetable for Isle of Man holiday		
	Activity	Notes
Day 1	Arrive	Introduction by manager Hotel dining room has view of the 15
Day 2	Tynwald Exhibition and Peel	Tynwald may have been founded in 16 not 979.
Day 3	Trip to Snaefell	Travel along promenade in a tram; train to Laxey; train to the 17 of Snaefell
Day 4	Free day	Company provides a 18 for local transport and heritage sites.
Day 5	Take the 19 railway train from Douglas to Port Erin	Free time, then coach to Castletown – former 20 has old castle.
Day 6	Leave	Leave the island by ferry or plane

PART 3 Questions 21–30**Questions 21–26**

What did findings of previous research claim about the personality traits a child is likely to have because of their position in the family?

Choose **SIX** answers from the box and write the correct letter, **A–H**, next to Questions 21–26.

Personality Traits

- A** outgoing
- B** selfish
- C** independent
- D** attention-seeking
- E** introverted
- F** co-operative
- G** caring
- H** competitive

Position in family

- 21** the eldest child
- 22** a middle child
- 23** the youngest child
- 24** a twin
- 25** an only child
- 26** a child with much older siblings

Test 1

Questions 27 and 28

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B** or **C**.

- 27 What do the speakers say about the evidence relating to birth order and academic success?
- A** There is conflicting evidence about whether oldest children perform best in intelligence tests.
 - B** There is little doubt that birth order has less influence on academic achievement than socio-economic status.
 - C** Some studies have neglected to include important factors such as family size.
- 28 What does Ruth think is surprising about the difference in oldest children's academic performance?
- A** It is mainly thanks to their roles as teachers for their younger siblings.
 - B** The advantages they have only lead to a slightly higher level of achievement.
 - C** The extra parental attention they receive at a young age makes little difference.

Questions 29 and 30

Choose **TWO** letters, **A–E**.

Which **TWO** experiences of sibling rivalry do the speakers agree has been valuable for them?

- A** learning to share
- B** learning to stand up for oneself
- C** learning to be a good loser
- D** learning to be tolerant
- E** learning to say sorry

PART 4 Questions 31–40

Complete the notes below.

Write **ONE WORD ONLY** for each answer.

The Eucalyptus Tree in Australia

Importance

- it provides **31** and food for a wide range of species
- its leaves provide **32** which is used to make a disinfectant

Reasons for present decline in number

A) Diseases

(i) 'Mundulla Yellows'

- Cause – lime used for making **33** was absorbed
– trees were unable to take in necessary iron through their roots

(ii) 'Bell-miner Associated Die-back'

- Cause – **34** feed on eucalyptus leaves
– they secrete a substance containing sugar
– bell-miner birds are attracted by this and keep away other species

B) Bushfires

William Jackson's theory:

- high-frequency bushfires have impact on vegetation, resulting in the growth of **35**
- mid-frequency bushfires result in the growth of eucalyptus forests, because they:
 - make more **36** available to the trees
 - maintain the quality of the **37**
- low-frequency bushfires result in the growth of **38** '..... rainforest', which is:
 - a **39** ecosystem
 - an ideal environment for the **40** of the bell-miner

READING

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1–13, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

Nutmeg – a valuable spice

The nutmeg tree, *Myristica fragrans*, is a large evergreen tree native to Southeast Asia. Until the late 18th century, it only grew in one place in the world: a small group of islands in the Banda Sea, part of the Moluccas – or Spice Islands – in northeastern Indonesia. The tree is thickly branched with dense foliage of tough, dark green oval leaves, and produces small, yellow, bell-shaped flowers and pale yellow pear-shaped fruits. The fruit is encased in a fleshy husk. When the fruit is ripe, this husk splits into two halves along a ridge running the length of the fruit. Inside is a purple-brown shiny seed, 2–3 cm long by about 2 cm across, surrounded by a lacy red or crimson covering called an ‘aril’. These are the sources of the two spices nutmeg and mace, the former being produced from the dried seed and the latter from the aril.

Nutmeg was a highly prized and costly ingredient in European cuisine in the Middle Ages, and was used as a flavouring, medicinal, and preservative agent. Throughout this period, the Arabs were the exclusive importers of the spice to Europe. They sold nutmeg for high prices to merchants based in Venice, but they never revealed the exact location of the source of this extremely valuable commodity. The Arab-Venetian dominance of the trade finally ended in 1512, when the Portuguese reached the Banda Islands and began exploiting its precious resources.

Always in danger of competition from neighbouring Spain, the Portuguese began subcontracting their spice distribution to Dutch traders. Profits began to flow into the Netherlands, and the Dutch commercial fleet swiftly grew into one of the largest in the world. The Dutch quietly gained control of most of the shipping and trading of spices in Northern Europe. Then, in 1580, Portugal fell under Spanish rule, and by the end of the 16th century the Dutch found themselves locked out of the market. As prices for pepper, nutmeg, and other spices soared across Europe, they decided to fight back.

In 1602, Dutch merchants founded the VOC, a trading corporation better known as the Dutch East India Company. By 1617, the VOC was the richest commercial operation in the world. The company had 50,000 employees worldwide, with a private army of 30,000 men and a fleet of 200 ships. At the same time, thousands of people across Europe were dying of the plague, a highly contagious and deadly disease. Doctors were desperate for a way to stop the spread of this disease, and they decided nutmeg held the cure. Everybody wanted nutmeg, and many were willing to spare no expense to have it. Nutmeg bought for a few pennies in Indonesia could be sold for 68,000 times its original cost on the streets of London. The only problem was the short supply. And that’s where the Dutch found their opportunity.

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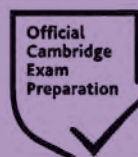
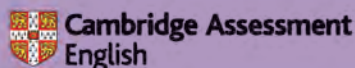
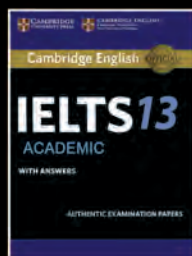
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Experts together

Our aim is to deliver the materials you tell us you need. Exclusive insights from test development and candidate performance guarantee expert content. The result is a unique *Exam Journey* in each course, ensuring every student is ready on exam day. From skills development to exam tasks, language discovery to real-world usage, we create better learning experiences, together.

Experience

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