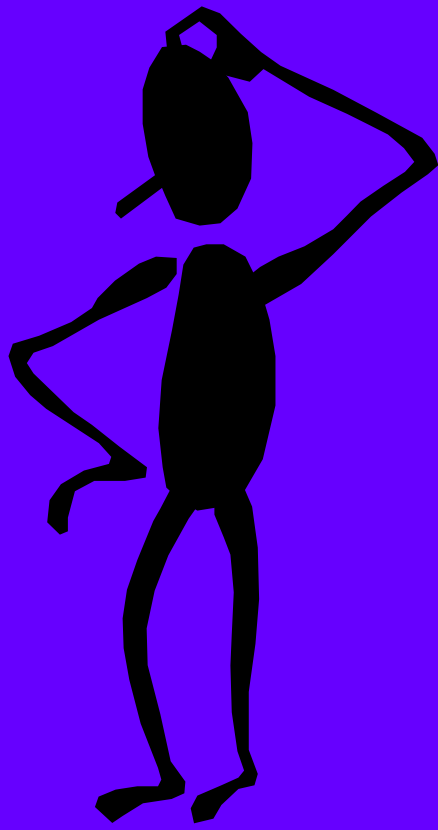
IELTS

Academic Module
Writing Test



Aims of the Session

- To give a brief overview of the test.
- To look at the two types of tasks you have to do in the test.
- To suggest ways to prepare for the paper.
- To offer tips on how to do the tasks.
- To suggest possible resources.

Academic Writing Module – Test Overview

- third test
- 2 tasks (60 mins)
- Task 1 - 150 words (20 mins)
- Task 2 - 250 words (40 mins)
- under word limit penalised
- notes unacceptable
- card with task on either side
- answer booklet

Writing Task 1

- Given graphic or pictorial information – need to write a description. (OHT 1)
- Bar charts/line graphs/pie charts & tables most frequent. (OHTs 1,2,3,4,5)
- But sometimes – object/series of pictures /diagrams or flow charts. (OHTs 6,7,8)
- Could be more than one graph or chart. (OHT 9)

Writing Task 1

Tests ability to:

- **describe & interpret graphic data**
- **describe stages of a process**
- **describe an object or event or sequence of events**
- **explain how something works**

Marking Task 1

Assessed on:

1. Task Fulfillment

Following instructions properly.

Writing clear, accurate & relevant description of info.

Focusing on important trends presented as graphic info.

2. Coherence & Cohesion

Organising writing using suitable structure.

Using connective words to link sentences & paragraphs logically.

3. Vocabulary & Sentence Structure

Using a range of appropriate vocabulary.

Using a variety of sentence structures.

How to Prepare for Task 1

Become familiar with graph types.

Do practise exercises describing graphs. (OHT 10)

Become familiar with ways to:

- express percentages. (OHT 11)
- express numbers & statistical data. (OHT 11)
- express trends. (OHT 12)
- make comparisons between data. (OHT 13)

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How to Prepare for Task 1

Look at language for:

- **describing how something works** (OHT 14).
- **making reference to graphs/figures** (OHT 15).
- **sequencing in a process** (OHT 15).

Think about topics in tables & graphs etc.

Tips on How to Do Task 1

Spend 5 minutes reading the graphs/charts etc.

Make sure you understand axes. (OHT 9)

Make sure you follow lines on graph. (OHT 16)

Focus on the key information.

If two graphs – compare.

Think about the time period – tenses.

Vary your vocabulary.

Organize information clearly.

Write neatly & cross out errors with one line.

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Tips on How to Do Task 1

DON’T copy phrases from the question.

DON’T include info. not in the graph/picture.

DON’T take more than 20 minutes.

DON’T forget to leave time to read it through.

Writing Task 2

Given a discussion topic.

Tests ability to:

- discuss a problem & present a solution.
- present & justify opinions.
- compare and contrast evidence or opinions.
- argue a case.
- evaluate & challenge ideas, evidence & argument.

(OHT 17 & 18)

Marking Task 2

Assessed on:

1. Arguments, Ideas & Evidence -

- **clear, logical, well-supported.**
- **support with personal experience.**
- **focus on topic.**

2. Communicative Quality -

- **write fluently.**
- **write cohesive sentences & paragraphs.**

3. Vocabulary & Sentence Structure

- **range & variety.**
- **good spelling & punctuation.**

Carries more weight than Task 1.

How to Prepare for Task 2

Look at as many sample questions as possible.

Practise underlining key points & brainstorming questions.

Do practice questions with sample answers.

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How to Prepare for Task 2

Look at language used for:

- **linking ideas between sentences & paragraphs** (OHT 19).
- **expressing views** (OHT 20).
- **making concessions** (OHT 20).
- **giving opposing arguments** (OHT 20).
- **providing support to main points** (OHT 21).
- **referring to cause & effect** (OHT 21).
- **making comparisons & contrasts** (OHT 22).
- **concluding** (OHT 23).

How to Prepare for Task 2

Think about possible topics.

Brainstorm the topics for questions.

Write timed essays.

Tips on How to Do Task 2

Study question carefully.

Underline key points.

Quickly brainstorm the topic.

Decide on main points & supporting detail.

Organise points in a plan.

Structure according to type of essay.(OHT 23,24,25)

General Tips for Writing Module

Before the exam

- Practise writing timed essays.
- Keep up-to-date with current affairs.
- Write a list of your typical errors. (OHT 26)

During the exam

- Use a pen.
- Check your essay.

Resources for Writing Module Practice

IELTS Specimen Pack - practice material with answers.

Homesglen web site– excellent booklet to download.

- Gives different types of graphs.
- Gives language for describing trends etc.
- Gives sample answers.
- http://international.holmesglen.vic.edu.au/ie_writ.htm

Resources for Writing Module Practice

Books:

Advice & practice books:

Sahanaya, W et al, 2000. IELTS: Preparation and Practice - Reading and Writing.

- **graphs & useful language for Task 1.**

Practice books:

Cambridge Examination Papers: IELTS 1 IELTS 2 IELTS 3

Course books:

Jakeman, V & McDowell, C (1999) Insight into IELTS, CUP.

O'Connell, Sue (2002) Focus on IELTS, Longman.

Resources for Writing Module Practice

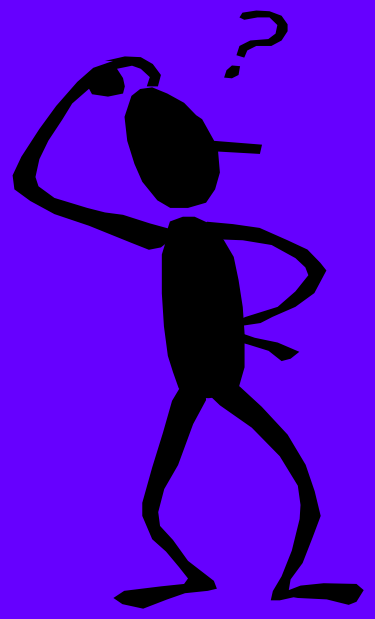
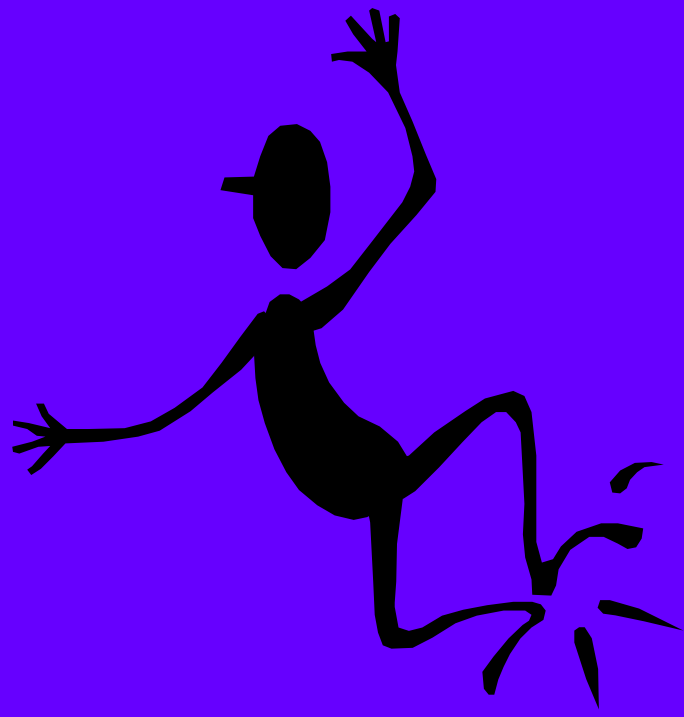
Additional help:

English language Centre (ELC) ‘How to prepare for IELTS – Writing’ booklet.

Language Learning Advisors in the Self Access Centre, ELC.

Workshops coming up.

Questions?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