# Standardized Testing Preparation: The IELTS

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Introduction

This packet includes general testing practice as well as specific IELTS questions. It is highly recommended to use this packet in a Conversation Partner session, but it can also be used for self-study.

The packet provides samples for the speaking and writing portions only. Other practice questions and full-length tests can be found under “Web Resources.”

The TOEIC and TOEFL packets also offer questions that are similar in nature and could be used for additional practice.
Which test should I take?

I am a non-native speaker applying to…

<table>
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<th>An undergraduate program in the U.S.</th>
<th>TOEFL; ACT or SAT</th>
<th>TOEFL is more commonly accepted in U.S. universities, although some schools now take the IELTS too.</th>
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<td>An undergraduate or graduate program in Canada</td>
<td>TOEFL; IELTS; CAE</td>
<td>Required exams vary widely depending on whether the school is in English or French-speaking Canada.</td>
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<td>An undergraduate program in the UK, New Zealand, or Australia</td>
<td>IELTS and Cambridge English Language Assessment tests</td>
<td>As of 2014, the British council is no longer accepting TOEFL or TOEIC scores to obtain UK visas!</td>
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<td>A graduate program in the U.S.</td>
<td>GRE; TOEFL</td>
<td>The GRE is the test required for most native and non-native speakers applying to graduate level programs. In addition, non-native speakers may be required to take the TOEFL or IELTS exam.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A graduate program in the UK, New Zealand, or Australia</td>
<td>Cambridge English Language Assessment</td>
<td>As of 2014, the British council is no longer accepting TOEFL or TOEIC scores to obtain UK visas!</td>
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<td>Business school</td>
<td>GMAT; TOEIC</td>
<td>The TOEIC is similar to the TOEFL and IELTS, but it specifically tests workplace English.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law school</td>
<td>LSAT</td>
<td>The LSAT is taken by native and non-native speakers applying to law school.</td>
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Philadelphia Testing Sites and Fees

**IELTS: $200** Test dates usually offered once a month

ELTS Test Center: Suite 009
Drexel University
English Language Center
229 N. 33rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Check site below for exact test dates, [http://www.drexel.edu/clc/resources/testing_services/IELTS/](http://www.drexel.edu/clc/resources/testing_services/IELTS/)
General Testing Vocabulary
This page includes vocabulary that is good to study for any standardized test, as well as example sentences that might be used on a test.

**Affect and effect:** How does the globalization of English affect other languages?

According to the passage, what are the long-term effects of radiation exposure?

**Analogy:** In the passage above, “a pack of wolves” is an analogy for what?

**Classification:** The Dewey Decimal system is a form of book classification used in libraries.

**Conclude:** What did the researchers conclude at the end of their study?

**Condition:** What conditions must be met for a number to be prime?

**Connotation:** In the passage, fast food has a negative connotation with laziness.

**Determine:** How did scientists determine the origin of the fossils?

**Discourse:** In sentence 5, the phrase “academic discourse” refers to language used in the classroom.

**Draw conclusions:** We can draw conclusions about the author’s emotions based on his word choice.

* e.g. (for example) Legumes (e.g., beans and lentils) contain healthy fats.

**Genre:** What is the genre of the passage?

* i.e. (in other words): The recent boycott (i.e., the embargo on imported goods) has slowed business.

**Impact:** According to the argument above, how does pollution impact the fishing industry?

**Metaphor:** In the text, “the lion” is a metaphor for the government.

**Passage:** What can we infer from this passage?

**Significant:** What significant changes does the author propose?

**Symbol/symbolize:** What does the color black symbolize in the passage?

**Text:** What is Smith’s analysis of the text?

**Tone:** Which sentence below proves that the author’s tone is humorous?

**Valid/Invalid:** If a=c, which argument is invalid?

**Period:** In what time period does the story take place?
IELTS Overview

The IELTS, which is commonly used in the UK, offers two types of testing:

- **Academic**: for those applying to universities
- **General Training**: for those applying to jobs

Sample Tests and Questions: [http://www.cambridge.org/us/cambridgeenglish/resources](http://www.cambridge.org/us/cambridgeenglish/resources)

**Academic Reading (60 Minutes):**

- Diagram Label Completion: Read a passage and fill in a diagram. Use the text to help you label correctly.
- Identifying Information: Read a passage and identify which paragraphs contain certain information.
- Identifying Writers’ Views: Read a passage and decide if the statements reflect what the writer claims or not (using Yes, No, or Not Given as possible answers).
- Matching Features: Read a passage and then match a given list of items to a corresponding list.
- Matching Headings: Using numbers, match headings to the appropriate paragraph of a passage.
- Multiple Choice Questions: Read a passage and answer multiple choice questions.
- Table Completion: Similar to Diagram Label Completion, read a passage and fill in a table using information from the text.

**Academic Writing (60 Minutes):**

Task 1: Look at a chart or graph and summarize information from the chart by selecting important features and comparing/contrasting them.

Task 2: Read a statement about a specific topic and provide your opinion on the topic. Provide relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

**Academic Writing Sample Question 1:**

Look at the chart below, which give information on social media use between 2000 and 2013.* Summarize the information by selecting and reporting main features, and make comparisons where relevant. Write a minimum of 150 words.

*Note: These charts do not use real data. They are just for practice purposes.
Academic Writing Sample Question 2:

Write about the following topic:

*Nowadays, many people do not respect the elderly. Younger generations no longer value the wisdom and experiences of the older generations.*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons and supporting evidence (including personal knowledge and experience) for your answer. Write a minimum of 250 words.

General Training Reading (60 Minutes):

- **Flow Chart Completion**: Read a text and fill in a flow chart using no more than three words from the text for each response.
- **Identifying Information**: Read a passage and decide if a statement is true, false, or not given.
- **Matching Information**: For example, you might be asked to match statements or phrases to advertisements, job postings, or other everyday texts.
- **Matching Features**: Similar to the corresponding Academic Reading section. Read a passage and then match a given list of items to a corresponding list.
- **Matching Headings**: Similar to Academic Reading Section. Using numbers, match headings to the appropriate paragraph of a passage.
- **Multiple Choice Questions**: Read a passage and answer multiple choice questions.
- **Sentence Completion**: Read a passage and choose a maximum of two words from the text to complete the corresponding sentences.
- **Short Answer Questions**: Read a Short text (such as an ad or notice) and answer questions using no more than three words from the original text.
General Training Writing (60 Minutes):

Task 1: Write a minimum of 150 words in response to a prompt. The prompt may ask you to write a letter proposing a solution to a problem or requesting help.

Task 2: Read a statement about a specific topic and state your opinion on the topic. Give personal experience and knowledge to support your claims.

General Writing Sample Question 1:

Write a letter to your neighbor is a musician. He often practices his music late at night. Provide reasons why the music is bothering you and propose a solution to the problem. Write at least 150 words.

General Writing Sample Question 2:

Some people prefer online shopping to shopping in stores. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Give reasons for your answer and provide any supporting evidence, such as your own knowledge or experience.

Listening (30 minutes):

Form Completion: Listen to a telephone conversation and then fill out a form based on the dialogue (for example, first and last name, prices, sizes, etc.)

Multiple Choice: Listen to a fragment of a conversation and answer a few multiple choice questions.

Short Answer: Listen to a short excerpt from a talk and provide answers to questions about the talk.

Sentence Completion: Listen to a conversation and fill in sentences using no more than two words for each answer.

Matching: You will listen to a conversation and then match words to certain categories (for example, you must decide whether the speaker agrees or disagrees, or wants or does not want to do something).

Plan/Map/Diagram Labelling: Listen to a lecture or explanation. Fill in the chart using information from the recording.

Speaking (30 Minutes):

Introduction and Interview: The examiner will introduce him or herself and check the test taker’s identification. Then, the interview will commence. Common questions include everyday topics, such as:

- What is your home city like?
- What is the most interesting part of your city/town?
- Do you like living there? Why or why not?
- What neighborhood do you live in?
- How long have you lived there?
- Where would be your ideal place to live?
Individual Long Turn: The test taker is given a task card and must follow the prompt on the card. There is one minute to prepare and 1-2 minutes to speak.

Examples:

- Describe an object that is important to you. Where did you get it and why do you value it?
- Describe a hobby or activity you enjoy doing. Why do you like it? How long have you been doing it? Why would you recommend it?
- Talk about a traditional dish that your family eats. What ingredients are used? How is it made? Is there other special preparation for this dish?
- Describe a movie that you watched recently and why you liked it.
- Describe a book that you’ve read that you really liked and why you liked it.
- Talk about something you do to relax or have fun.
- Talk about a subject you are studying


Two-Way Discussion: A discussion between the test taker and the examiner. The examiner might ask follow up questions about cultural differences, family values, technology, or other social topics.

General Testing Speaking Practice

For this section, you will need headphones and/or a quiet space and an internet connection.

Most of these practice questions use 3-minute TED talks and Upworthy videos. Note that there are a variety of accents: non-native, American, and British.

Practice 1:

Ariana Huffington: How to succeed? Get more sleep

[http://www.ted.com/talks/arianna_huffington_how_to_succeed_get_more_sleep](http://www.ted.com/talks/arianna_huffington_how_to_succeed_get_more_sleep)

Based on what the speaker says in the video, decide if the statements below A: support the speaker’s claims B: do not support the speaker’s claims or C: information is not given.

1. Many people think that sleep deprivation is a sign of being productive and busy.
2. People are making poor decisions because they get too much sleep.
3. Having a high I.Q. means that you’re a good leader.

Practice 2:
Lee Cronin: Print your own medicine

http://www.ted.com/talks/lee_cronin_print_your_own_medicine

True or False?

The 3-D printer in the talk is being used to print:

a. Fabrics
b. Beakers and test tubes
c. Food

How will the 3-D printer make medicine?

a. Using special ink that prints molecules
b. Using hair samples
c. Using a superbug

Someday, the 3-D printer will be able to print medicine specific to a person by using:

a. That person’s special ink
b. That person’s DNA
c. That person’s image

Practice 3: True or False

Lalitesh Katragadda: Making Maps to Fight Disaster, Build Economies

http://www.ted.com/talks/lalitesh_katragadda_making_maps_to_fight_disaster_build_economies

1. Only 20% of the world was mapped in 2005.
2. Google Map Maker allows people to map things locally.
3. Maps could help in times of disaster by revealing hospitals and unknown roads.

Practice 4: Matching

1. GPS
2. Characteristics of storms
3. Names of storms in 2010
4. Early origins of humanizing storms
5. Sixth sense

A. Greek gods
B. Alex, Bonnie, Collin
More Advanced Listening Practice

Short Answer Listening Practice 5

Sarah Parcak: Archeology from Space

http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_parcak_archeology_from_space

a. In what country was this research conducted?
b. What kind of data was used to find an ancient city?
c. What did the archeologists find five meters down underneath the mud?
d. Who is being trained to use the satellite technology so that they can make discoveries?

Multiple Choice Listening Practice 6

Robin Nagle: What I discovered in New York City Trash

http://www.ted.com/talks/robin_nagle_what_i_discovered_in_new_york_city_trash

1. Who cleans up the trash in New York City?
   a. Private companies
   b. Volunteers
   c. The Department of Sanitation

2. What is one reason that being a sanitation worker a dangerous job? Choose the best answer.
a. People throw away too much trash
b. Motorists do not pay attention when driving around garbage trucks
c. People ignore sanitation workers

3. What does the speaker suggest at the end of the talk?
   a. Clean up your own trash
   b. Pay sanitation workers more
   c. Thank sanitation workers for what they do

Answer Key:

Practice 1:

1. A
2. B (people are making poor decisions because they are getting too little sleep, not too much)
3. B (The speaker says that having a high I.Q. does not mean you are a good leader)

Practice 2:

1. B. Beakers and test tubes
2. A. Using special ink that prints molecules
3. B. that person’s DNA

Practice 3:

1. False (15% of the world was not mapped in 2005)
2. True
3. True

Practice 4:

- A: 4
- B: 3
- C: 1
- D: 5
- E: 2

Practice 5:

a. Egypt
b. Satellite data (or topography data)
c. Pottery
d. Young Egyptians

Practice 6:

1. C. Department of Sanitation
2. B. Motorists do not pay attention when driving around garbage trucks
3. C. Thank sanitation workers for what they do

Practice Speaking Prompts
Listen to the video “Hannah Brencher: Love letters to strangers.”
http://www.ted.com/talks/hannah_brencher_love_letters_to_strangers
Do you ever write letters? For whom do you write them and why?
Do you think letters are better than writing emails or texts? Why or why not?

General Writing Practice
Look at a chart or graph and summarize information from the chart by selecting important features and comparing/contrasting them.

Read a statement about a specific topic and provide your opinion on the topic. Provide relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Should more money be put into space exploration? Why or why not?
Web Resources
http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/

IELTSbuddy.com

IELTSpodcast.com

Vocabulary Practice: http://www.dcielts.com/ielts-vocabulary/awl-exercises/


General Practice in Reading and Listening:

Videojug.com

Esl-bits.net

http://edition.englishclub.com/category/podcasts/

Magoosh.com