Preparing for IELTS Writing Exam?


**Task 1:** Write a letter explaining a situation in at least 150 words.

**Time:** 1 hour

**Task 2:** Write a short formal essay of at least 250 words.

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1. **Timing** - Use your time wisely. Read the questions carefully and plan your essay using brainstorming. Complete task 1 within 10 mins and spend 5 mins checking it. You should spend no more than 15 mins on task 1 and 45 mins on task 2.

2. **Planning** - Write down your examples in bullet points to make notes, so you don’t forget what to write. Try to think of as many ideas as you can.

3. **Accuracy** - Always check your work for grammar, spelling or punctuation errors.

4. **Word count** - Complete more than 250 words, but no less than 350 if you want a band 7.

5. **Structure** - Always use clear structure, firstly, secondly, on the other hand, for example, in conclusion etc.

6. **Depth** - Use clear examples and signify these using - for instance, for example etc.

7. **Spelling** - Make sure you spell every word correctly, as you will lose unnecessary marks for poor spelling.

8. **Review** - Review your essay and read it back to yourself. Does it make sense? Any changes? Forgot to add something?

9. **Proofread** - At the end you need to proofread everything and double check your answers as much as possible. This will improve your accuracy. You will need a really high level of detail and attention to detail for a band 7 or above.

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**Vocabulary**

Enrich your vocabulary to perform well in Writing. Writing requires wide academic vocabulary especially when you have a time limit. You should not struggle with vocabulary to express your opinions and ideas.

**Grammar**

While writing, there are some rules you should follow. Learn some basics of English Grammar including punctuation, prepositions, pronouns, verb forms, passive writing etc. You should not use 1st and 2nd pronouns (like I and You) in formal writing. Grammar mistakes get noticed very easily and you will lose marks in writing section.

**Spelling**

A lot of students make spelling mistakes even when they know the correct spelling. While writing in hurry to complete in time, we all make spelling mistakes. Make sure you spell words correctly and recheck once it is written. You will be penalized for incorrect spellings.

**Relevance**

Relevance is one of the most observed aspect of English writing. While writing, you should remember the topic and your answer is relevant to the topic. Don’t write about unrelated topics just to make it long.

**Formal Writing**

Avoid informal language in writing section. Get yourself familiar with formal writing and informal writing formats. Don’t use short forms, abbreviations, informal words, slangs etc.

**Cramming**

Sometimes we memorize introductory lines and model answers to do well in exams. Remember the structure but don’t memorize the model answers and difficult long words without understanding its usage. Memorizing answers is a bad idea as examiners are trained to recognize them and you may lose marks for this in writing test.

**Time Limit**

You have to complete both tasks in an hour only. You will have to complete two tasks in writing section. Spend 20 minutes approximately on task 1 and spend 40 minutes approximately on task 2. You can also choose to attempt task 2 first. But you will have to complete both tasks in time limit otherwise you will be penalized.

**Word limit**

You should take care of word limit while writing. Your answers should not be too short or too long. For example, the writing task 1 has a word limit of 150 words, there is no point of writing 500-800 words. You will not get extra marks in fact there is a chance of making more grammar mistakes which will result in penalizing.

**Practice**

The most important tip that makes the all difference is you must practice writing tasks before the test. You MUST practice writing both tasks to check your writing skills, test your word limit, time limit, grammar mistakes so you can learn from your mistakes and improve your weak areas.

Adapted from online-ielts-course.com & slide share (author Shreyansh Jain)  @OpenAcademics