

# Introduction

## Who is this book aimed at?

This book is designed for candidates of any level hoping to take the IELTS test. It is suitable for students working alone or in a classroom situation. The materials can be used for self-study, or can be integrated into an IELTS preparation course. The book is also a valuable resource for teachers who are preparing IELTS candidates.

## How can students of different levels use this book?

The IELTS test has two modules: the Academic Module and the General Training Module (see the following pages for an explanation of the two). Each Academic Module candidate will take the same test, no matter what his or her English level is. Similarly, each General Training candidate will take the same General Training test. So, the information in this book is useful and important to students of every level.

Lower-level language students generally need more guided practice and there are exercises in this book to provide this. However, they also need experience and practice in expressing themselves more freely, as this is what IELTS requires them to do. Similarly, more advanced students need frequent opportunities for self-expression, but they also need to become more self-critical and aware of their own common mistakes. Corpus research has shown that even high-level candidates make careless slips, so all levels can benefit from both controlled and free practice.

## What are the aims of this book?

This book aims to provide an official, comprehensive guide to IELTS as well as a range of authentic practice tests.

The skills section of the book provides

- a detailed explanation of each paper and each section of IELTS;
- examples of the different types of question candidates can expect to find in each section;
- an analysis of the language skills and strategies needed for each type of question;
- study tips and test tips that can help you to achieve your best score.

This book also contains eight complete Practice Tests, to give you thorough preparation.

## How is the book organised?

At the beginning of the book, there is a summary of each IELTS paper. Then, there are four sections dealing with the four skills covered in IELTS: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. These are divided into units, which focus on key areas aiming to build your abilities and confidence, and provide authentic test practice. The second half of the book contains eight complete Practice Tests, each with a comprehensive answer key. The first practice test contains hints and reminders to guide you. At the end of the book, you will find the Answer Key and complete Recording Scripts.

## How do I use this book?


For the skills sections, it is best to work through each unit in order. This is because the tasks and information are graded, developing your skills as the units progress. However, the different skills can be covered in any order. For example, you may decide to concentrate on only one skill at a time, or you may want to work on all four skills to provide a more balanced course. You should study all of the skills units before taking the Practice Tests.

When taking the Practice Tests, try to use the tips and strategies recommended in the skills units. You should also try to take the tests under exam conditions and stick closely to the time limits in the test.

## How is this book different from other books?

This book is the only official guide to IELTS. The skills units and Practice Tests have been written by IELTS exam writers, so you can be sure they contain authentic, accurate and up-to-date information and advice. For the first time, we have also included a DVD showing IELTS Speaking tests, along with a commentary to explain the candidates' scores. Our writers have used the Cambridge Learner Corpus to help choose the most appropriate language and skill areas to focus on.

## What is the Cambridge Learner Corpus?

 The Cambridge Learner Corpus is the world's largest learner corpus. It is made up of thousands of exam scripts written by students from all over the world who have taken Cambridge ESOL exams. The corpus allows us to see the types of error candidates commonly make in the IELTS exam at each different level.

## What is 'paraphrase' and why is it important?

Paraphrase is the use of different words to express the same idea. In order to test whether you have understood the Reading and Listening texts, the questions in IELTS will paraphrase the words used in the texts. In the Writing and Speaking sections of the test, being able to use paraphrase, instead of simply repeating and copying the words in the question, will show that you have a wide vocabulary and help you to achieve a higher score. So, using and understanding paraphrase is important in every part of the test.