



TOP TIPS FOR IELTS

Academic Writing



Top Tips for IELTS Academic Writing

Official Cambridge IELTS Preparation

We provide you with the tools and resources you need to learn and show your skills to the world. Whether you're studying in a classroom, or at home, you can rely on us to help you get ready for test day.

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Introduction

Top Tips for IELTS Academic Writing is an essential part of your revision for the IELTS test.

The tips are based on advice which IELTS materials writers have collected from many years' experience of involvement in the production of IELTS tests. Each section starts with a tip which is followed by an example taken from IELTS material.

How to use *Top Tips for IELTS Academic Writing*

Top Tips for IELTS Academic Writing is flexible. You can look at a different tip from a different section every day, or you can start at the beginning and work through until you get to the end of the tips. Whichever method you prefer, read the example and the explanation carefully to make sure that you understand each tip. When you have understood all the tips try the test on page 19.

Guide to symbols



This symbol introduces the tip which is usually at the top of the page. Each tip shows you how to write a better answer.



This is an extra piece of advice which is important for a particular part of the test.

How to revise for IELTS Academic Writing

In the Academic Writing test you will have to describe and explain a graph or other visual material (Task 1) and write an essay giving your opinion on a topic (Task 2).

Practise writing answers to exam tasks on a regular basis – if possible, ask a teacher or other good English speaker to correct your work. Pay attention to the comments they make and try to improve in the next piece of writing you do for them.

- Always think about the structure of what you are going to write – make a plan first.
- In your writing make a point of using new words and expressions that you have recently learned – if necessary use a good learner’s dictionary for examples of how words are used in practice.
- Practise checking your writing carefully so that it is as accurate as possible – look particularly for the kinds of mistakes that you know you often make (mistakes with verb agreement, prepositions or articles, for example).


We hope these ideas will help you to make the most of your revision time. Above all, we hope that you enjoy your studies and wish you all the best for your exam.

Book your IELTS test at ielts.org/book-a-test



Top Tips for IELTS Academic Writing

What's in the Academic Writing test?

Task 1  You have to describe some information contained in a graph/table/chart/diagram and present the description in your own words. The information may be data, the stages of a process or how something works or you may have to describe an object or an event.

You have to write at least 150 words.

Task 2  You have to write a short essay in response to a topic which is presented as a point of view, an argument or a problem.

You have to write at least 250 words.



Task 2 contributes twice as much as Task 1 to the Writing score.



1 hour
(*about 20 minutes for Task 1 and 40 minutes for Task 2*)

Task 1



TIP: Whether you have to describe a graph, table or chart, think carefully about what you need to include in your description. Don't describe every detail of the information. Choose the most important and interesting features to write about.

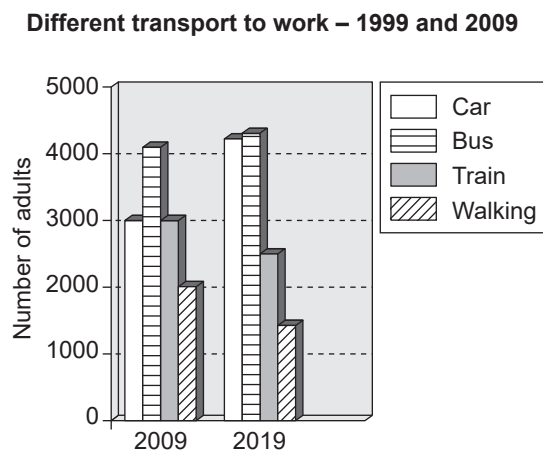
Example

Here is an example of a Task 1 question using a bar chart.



The bar chart below shows different methods of transport to work in 2009 and 2019.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



Here are some notes which a student made for this task.

Bus – the highest number of people using it / a slight increase

Car – the second most popular / a large rise

Train – as popular as the car in 2009 / a fall

Walking – the least popular / a fall

Explanation: These notes are part of the plan for writing. They illustrate the most important features you could write about.

Task 1



TIP: Support your description with figures, but you don't need to give every number exactly. You can be approximate by using words like **over**, **about** and **around**.

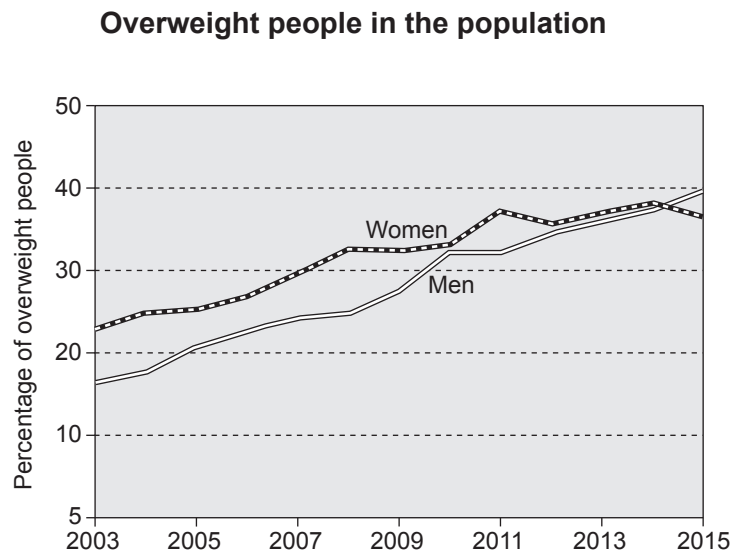
Example

Here is an example of a Task 1 question about overweight people.



The graph below shows the percentage of overweight people in the population from 2003 to 2015.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



Here is part of what a student wrote for this task.

In 2005 about 5% more women were overweight than men, and over the whole period until 2014 women were more likely to be so than men.

Between 2012 and 2014 the figures for men and women were very similar, with a slightly greater percentage of females being overweight during these years.


However, a higher number of men were overweight in 2015, with the percentage for women around 2% lower in this year.

Explanation: The highlighted words use approximate language to describe the figures and information.




Use language to compare things – ‘more than,’ ‘greater than,’ etc. This will help you to make comparisons of figures in charts, graphs and tables.

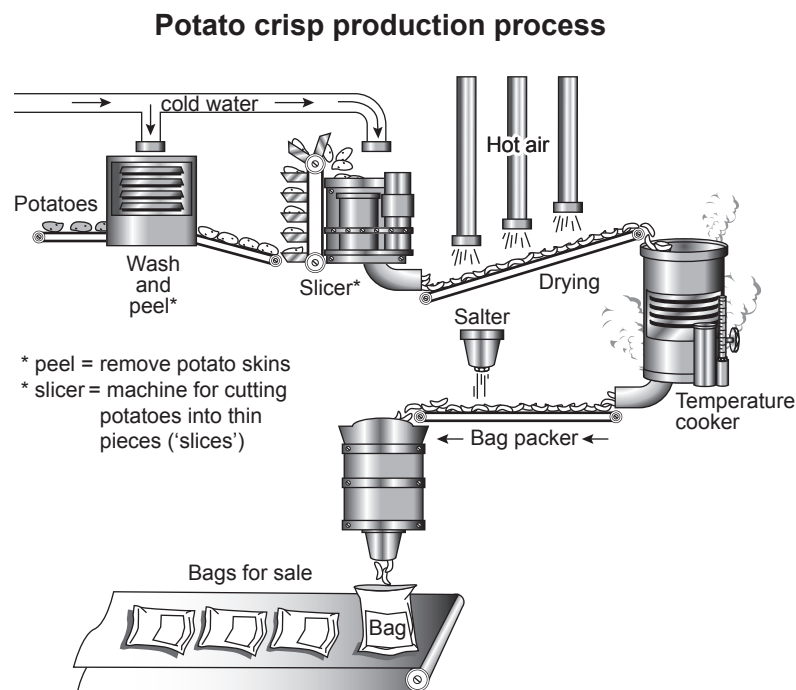
Task 1

 **TIP:** Sometimes you will have to describe a diagram showing a process. Identify all the stages of the process clearly before writing about it.

Example

Here is an example of a Task 1 question asking you to describe the process of making potato crisps from a diagram.

 **The diagram below shows the process of making potato crisps.** Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



Explanation: Here are some notes made by a student before writing a summary identifying the seven stages.

1 Potatoes are peeled and washed with cold water.

2 They are sliced.

3 They are dried using hot air.

4 They are cooked.

5 Salt is added.

6 They are packed in bags.

7 They are transported and sold.



If there are any difficult technical words in the diagram, chart or graph, they will be explained.

Task 1



TIP: Use words in your description that show the sequence of the process.

Example

Here are parts of a description by a student for the potato crisp production process from the task on the previous page. The highlighted words show the sequence of the process.

First of all, the potatoes are peeled and washed with cold water.

After this they are carried by conveyor belt to be sliced and washed again. When they ...

Finally, the potato crisps are transferred into bags and transported to be sold in shops and supermarkets.



TIP: Check your writing when you have finished. Use a checklist every time you practise writing.

Checklist	✓
Have you written at least 150 words?	
Have you included an overview of the information?	
Have you selected the most important information?	
Have you supported your points with examples?	
Have you compared things effectively?	
Have you used linking words to connect your points?	
Have you made any mistakes in grammar or spelling?	

Task 2

 **TIP:** Analyse the question. Think carefully about what you are being asked to do.

Example

Here is an example of a Task 2 question.

 **Some people say that governments need to do more to prevent damage to the environment. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?**

Here is part of a student's answer to this question.

I think it is very important for us to protect the environnement.

It is now possible for recycle the materiels which we throw away, so we must take more responsibility for this.

Our planete has not so many ressources so we must also use not so much oil and electricity and gas and water. And I think we should take care for pollution so that the future generations can breath the clean air.

Explanation: This question specifically asks for your view on whether governments need to do more to protect the environment. It does not ask you to write about environmental damage and its causes, or about what individuals need to do.

Task 2



TIP: Decide on your position and then plan your writing carefully by making notes and organising them into paragraphs. Make sure that each paragraph has a clear focus.

Example

Here is an example of a Task 2 question.



Some people say that governments need to do more to prevent damage to the environment.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Here is part of what a student wrote for this task.

- 1** Agree that governments need to do more and give reasons to explain your opinion.
- 2** Disagree that governments need to do more and give reasons to explain your opinion.
- 3** Discuss both positions and say that they are doing some things but there are more things they could do.

These notes by a student show how to write a plan for an essay structure for the first approach, agreeing with the statement.

Introduction

Great deal of damage done to the environment by industry, transport & other things. Terrible impact on the world. I agree governments must do more to stop this.

Para 1

Governments should impose pollution taxes on companies. Financial incentive to change behaviour.

Para 2

Strict penalties for causing pollution e.g. heavy fines. Make those who cause damage pay to clean it up.

Para 3

Governments should increase knowledge and education about damage to the environment. More people will take action to prevent harmful effects.

Conclusion

Previous points show why governments need to do more. Climate change a result of damage. Serious effects for everyone around the world.

Task 2



TIP: Include examples to support your opinion.

Example

Here is an example of a Task 2 question.



Some people say that governments need to do more to prevent damage to the environment.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Here is part of a student answer for this question, showing how you can use examples.

If governments imposed heavy taxes on those companies that cause pollution to the environment, for example, a chemical factory polluting a local river or an airline using planes that cause high levels of carbon emissions, then there would be a serious financial incentive for them to change their behaviour and invest in cleaner, more environmentally friendly ways of conducting their businesses.

Governments should increase knowledge and education about how damage is done to the environment. This could be through public information advertisements or funding television documentaries, for instance, which would reach a large number of people. The result of this would be that people would have more awareness of the causes of harmful environmental damage and would exert pressure on those responsible for it or boycott their goods and services.

Explanation: The highlighted parts of the text show how the student uses examples to expand and develop the points.

Task 2



TIP: Leave enough time to edit and check your writing. It's important to look for grammar and spelling mistakes, which are easy to make when you are writing to a time limit.

Example

Here is an example of a Task 2 question.



Some people say that governments need to do more to prevent damage to the environment.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Here is part of a student answer for this question.

These days a great deal of damage is being done to the **enviroment** environment
 by industry, transport and other businesses. This **are** is having a
 terrible impact on the world and is a major factor in causing climate
 change, which could be catastrophic for life on earth. Governments
urgently **urgent** need to do something to stop this before **is** it is too late.

Explanation: The highlighted words in this student answer are examples of mistakes which you can easily correct if you check your writing. The correct versions for each mistake are shown in the boxes.

General tips for Writing

- 1** Make sure that what you write is relevant to the question.
- 2** Use a range of linking words to connect and sequence your ideas.
- 3** Use a range of vocabulary that demonstrates your knowledge of English.
- 4** In Task 1, make sure the information you write about reflects the chart/table/graph/diagram accurately.
- 5** In Task 2, make sure that you give your own view clearly and support it effectively.
- 6** Check your work. Do you have any particular mistakes that you often tend to make, e.g. leaving out articles? Know your own typical mistakes and check your work carefully for them.

IELTS Academic Writing test

WRITING TASK 1

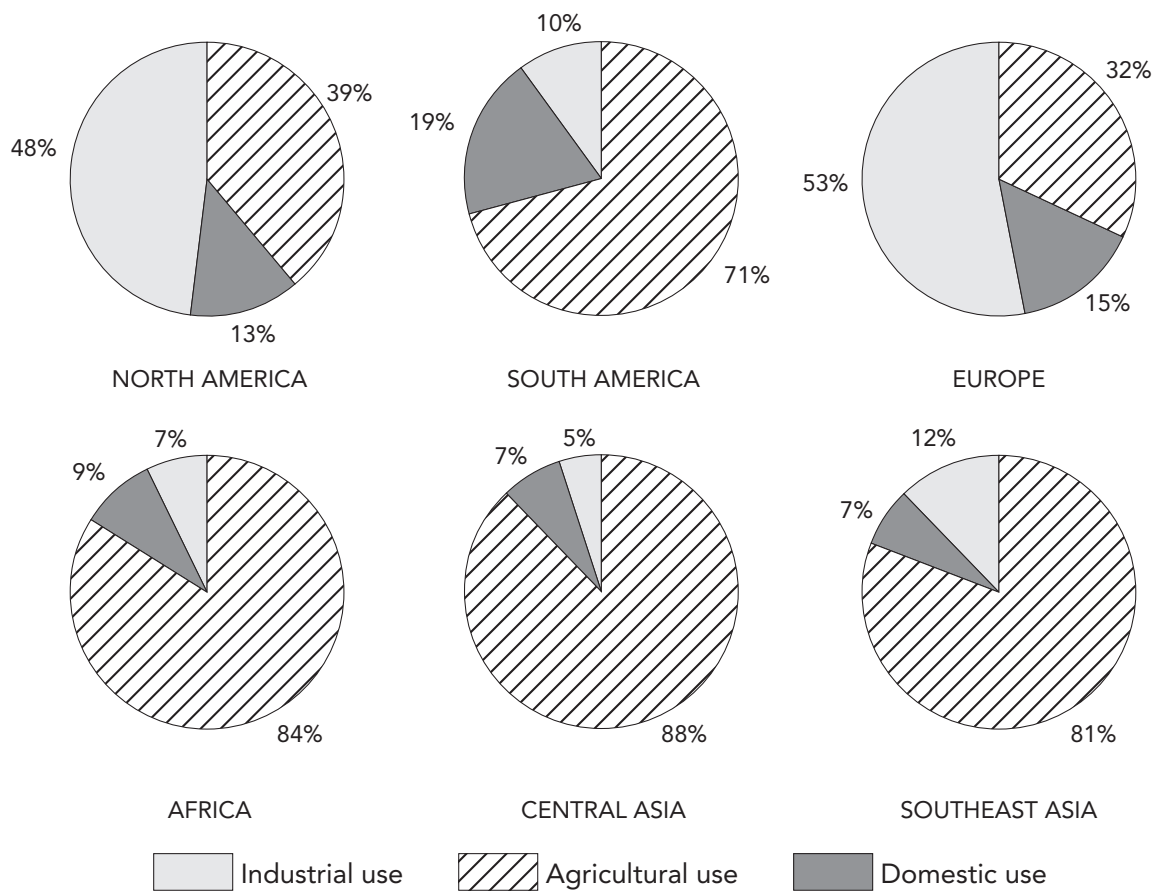
You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The charts below show the percentage of water used for different purposes in six areas of the world.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.

Percentage of water used for different purposes in six areas of the world



WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

Some people claim that not enough of the waste from homes is recycled. They say that the only way to increase recycling is for governments to make it a legal requirement.

To what extent do you think laws are needed to make people recycle more of their waste?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Sample answers and examiner comments

WRITING TASK 1

SAMPLE ANSWER

This is an answer written by a candidate who achieved a **Band 4.5** score.

The charts indicate to Five places on the earth. Talking about water and the ways of using it.

It seen obvious all of pie charts have the got the Lowest precentage in the domestic uses like at home. However, the Largest precentage went with the Agricultural and farms. The center of Asia has the greatest numbers of precentage of Agricultural use. On the other hand in Europe they did not use, water so much as central Asia or Africa. They just use 32,4%. But in the industral they use it alot and the Largest precentage with them. If we check on Africa, it seen they almost the second after Asia use water in industrial and opposite of Europe.

In North America and Europe they slightly same in industrial use and just less 4 precentages to Europe, South Asia and South America are uses the water in Agriculturat rather than industrial.

Overall, they all use water much in the farm and Agricultural. Europe and North America they use water more than others in the industrial areas. Africa got the lowest precentage in domestic and industrial uses.

Here is the examiner's comment:

The candidate covers all the data in the charts, but there is some inaccuracy in his or her description (*the largest precentage went with the Agricultural and farms*) (not true in all cases) and there is a shortage of data to support the descriptions. There is an attempt to summarise the main points at the end of the description. Information is evident, but it is not arranged coherently (the description jumps from different usage in general to specific use in different countries, but this does not follow a logical sequence). Without reference back to the individual charts, it is hard to follow the description, especially where reference is also unclear (*it, them, they*). The range of lexis is just adequate for the task (*Largest precentage, greatest numbers, alot, the second after Asia*), but there is reliance on input material and errors in spelling are noticeable, even where the lexis is supplied in the prompt or the diagrams. A very limited range of structures is used and grammatical errors are frequent (*... all of pie charts have the got ..., ... they almost the second after Asia use water in industrial and opposite of Europe, ... they slightly same in industrial use, ... South Asia and South America are uses the water in Agriculturat rather than industrial*). The script represents a mixed profile, but overall achieves Band 4.5.

WRITING TASK 2

SAMPLE ANSWER

This is an answer written by a candidate who achieved a **Band 5** score.

Nowadays, more than million tons of wastes have been being produced which from home everyday and some people claim that not enough of the litters is recycled. Therefore, they think the governments should have a policy to increase recycling.

It is necessary to say that their governments should take action. For example, providing rubbish bag into each family so that seperate a litter and make it to have value. Many waste; paper, box or steel from home can sale to governments or decrease council tax. Either, the government should provide junk bank that the citizen can deposit recycled waste and inverse to be some money.

Moreover, the government should have spot advertisement on television to motivate advantages of recycling. In Thailand, my country, we have "3R" advertisement standing For reuse, reduce and recycle and easy example way to do in house such as using less plastics bag (reduce), reuse take away box or sale some paper.

In school teacher teach children how to recycle waste at home and go back to tell their parent and come back to report their teacher. There is one day a week in order that clean school together which help they have a good attitud in cleaning.

In conclution, it should be good that the government make some law about waste tax and make people follow the law by give them back some money. Starting give education at school so that when they growth up the will do easier.

In my opinion, it is very easy to government to do as I mention above to reduce waste from homes such as "3R", junk bank, providing rubbish bins and teaching at school and It will be a good habit and good in long term.

Here is the examiner's comment:

The candidate expresses a position, but only partially addresses the prompt (he or she considers ways in which people can be encouraged to recycle, rather than explicitly looking at the extent to which laws are required); however, ideas are relevant and are supported with clear examples. There is a clear overall progression and cohesive devices are used effectively, if somewhat mechanically (apart from *Either*). Paragraphing is just adequate. Lexical range is adequate for the task and there are attempts to use less common items (*policy, junk bank, citizen, deposit*), but there are errors in word formation (*sale/sell, growth/grow up*) and some errors in word choice cause difficulty for the reader (*inverse to be some money, motivate advantages of recycling*). There are attempts to use complex sentence structures, but grammatical errors are frequent (*million tons of wastes have been being produced which from home everyday, easy example way to do in house, There is one day a week in order that clean school together which help they have ..., Starting give education*).

What to do on the day

Very few people like taking exams, but you can make the day of the exam easier if you make sure you know what to expect and what you will have to do before you go to the IELTS test centre.

Rules and regulations

For any exam you take, there are some rules and regulations about what you **must** do and what you **mustn't** do during the exam. Read through the rules and regulations below and if there is anything you don't understand, ask your teacher or the administrator at the test centre.

You must ...

- provide a proof of your identity (e.g. passport or national identity card) at registration and every examination session. Candidates taking the test outside their own country must produce a passport. This ID must contain a number, a signature, a date of birth and a photograph.
- inform the test centre of any changes to your identity document before the test date, bring the same identity document on the test day as the one recorded in your application, arrive at the test centre before the scheduled test start time. If you do not do any of the above you will not be allowed to take the test and you will not be eligible for a refund or transfer.
- consent for your identity to be verified both at test registration and on test day.
- only have on your desk your identification, a pen/pencil, a clear water bottle and an eraser.
- switch off your mobile phone, pager and any other electronic devices and put them with your personal belongings outside the test room.
- tell the test invigilator immediately if the conditions on the day of the test in any way impede your performance.

You must not ...

- impersonate another person or have another person impersonate you.
- attempt to cheat, copy the work of another candidate or disrupt the test.
- use, or attempt to use, a dictionary, pager, spell-checker, electronic recorder or mobile phone for the duration of the test. Any candidate doing so will be disqualified.
- talk to or disturb other candidates once the examination has started.

- use, or attempt to use, a dictionary.
- reproduce any part of the test in any format/medium. Any candidate doing so will have their test results disqualified and be liable to prosecution.
- remove any materials used during the examination. This includes, but is not limited to, examination papers, Speaking task cards, answer sheets and working paper.

Make sure you attend on time

- Know the date, time and place of your examination and arrive before the scheduled start time.
- If you arrive late for any of the components, report to the supervisor or invigilator. You may not be allowed to take the examination.

Provide what you need

- Take into the examination room only a pencil, pen, an eraser, a water bottle and your ID.
- You must not use correction fluid or highlighters.
- Leave anything which you do not need, or which is not allowed, outside the examination room.
- You may not lend anything to, or borrow anything from, another candidate during the examination.
- Do not bring valuables as the test centre cannot be responsible for these.

Examination instructions

- Listen to the supervisor and do what you are asked to do.
- Tell the supervisor or invigilator at once:
 - if you think you have the wrong question paper.
 - if the question paper is incomplete or illegible.
- Read carefully and follow the instructions printed on the question paper and on the answer sheet.
- Fill in the details required on the front of your question paper and on your answer sheet before the start of the examination.

Advice and assistance during the examination

- If you are not sure about what to do, raise your hand and an invigilator will come to help you.
- You must not ask for, and will not be given, any explanation of the questions.
- If you do not feel well on the day of the examination or think that your work may be affected for any other reason, tell the supervisor or invigilator.

Leaving the examination room

- You may not leave the examination room without the permission of the supervisor or invigilator.
- You cannot leave your seat until all papers have been collected and you have been told you can leave.
- When you leave the examination room you must leave behind any paper used for rough work, clearly crossed through, and any other materials provided for the examination.
- Do not make any noise near the examination room.

Results

- Results are issued by test centres, usually 13 days after the paper-based test.
- Results may be delayed or withheld where any of the rules and regulations have been breached.
- In exceptional circumstances, results may be delayed and you may be required to retake one or more modules where the pattern of module results is highly unusual.