

Improve your Skills

Writing *for IELTS*

with Answer Key

4.5–6.0



Sam McCarter • Norman Whitby


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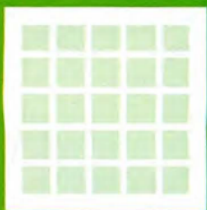
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Introduction

What is *Improve your IELTS Writing Skills*?

Improve your IELTS Writing Skills is a complete preparation course for students at score bands 4.5–6.00 preparing for the Academic Writing paper of the International English Language Testing System. Through targeted practice, it develops skills and language to help you achieve a higher IELTS score in the Academic Writing paper.

How can I use this book?

You can use *Improve your IELTS Writing Skills* as a book for studying on your own or in a class. If you are studying on your own, *Improve your IELTS Writing Skills* is designed to guide you step by step through the activities. This book is also completely self-contained: a clear and accessible key is provided so that you can easily check your answers as you work through the book. In addition, there is either a sample answer written by a student or a model answer written by the authors to accompany each Task 1 and Task 2 question.

If you are studying as part of a class, your teacher will direct you on how to use each activity. Some activities can be treated as discussions, in which case they can be a useful opportunity to share ideas and techniques with other learners.

How is *Improve your IELTS Writing Skills* organized?

It consists of ten units based around topics which occur commonly in the real test.

Each unit consists of three sections:

Task 1: exercises and examples to develop skills and language for Task 1 questions.

Task 2: exercises and examples to develop skills and language for Task 2 questions.

Practice test: a complete Academic Writing paper based on the unit topic to practise the skills learned.

Each Task 1 and Task 2 section is subdivided further into skills sections. These focus on specific areas of relevance to each task.

In addition, there are Technique boxes throughout the book. These reinforce key points on how to approach Academic Writing tasks.

How will *Improve your IELTS Writing Skills* improve my score?

By developing skills

The skills sections form a detailed syllabus of essential IELTS writing skills. For example, key elements of Task 1 preparation, such as *Describing trends* and *Comparing information*, are fully covered. Similarly, Task 2 skills, such as *Expressing solutions* and *Developing ideas*, are dealt with in detail.

By developing language

Each unit also contains a resource of useful phrases and vocabulary to use in each writing task. Over the course of *Improve your IELTS Writing Skills*, you will encounter a wide range of ideas to ensure that you are not lost for words when you get to the real test. These include concepts such as organizing words, trigger words and linking phrases, which all contribute to an appropriate academic writing style.

By developing test technique

The Technique boxes contain short tips which can easily be memorized and used as reminders in the real test. These include quick and easy advice about planning, understanding questions and how to use effectively the language you have learned.

How is the IELTS Academic Writing component organized?

The Academic Writing component of the IELTS lasts one hour. In the test, there are two tasks of different lengths, both of which you must answer.

What does each task consist of?

In Task 1, you will have to write at least 150 words to describe some data or a diagram. Data will normally be presented in the form of a graph, a bar or pie chart, a table or a combination of these. A diagram will normally relate to a process, the workings of an object or changes in maps over time. You are always expected to summarize the information by describing the main features, making comparisons where relevant.

In Task 2, you will have to write at least 250 words on a topic. You will be presented with an opinion, an argument or a problem and you will be expected to respond in some way. For example, in your response, you may be asked to:

- Express an opinion.
- Give views about two different opinions and give your own opinion.
- Discuss advantages and disadvantages.
- Give a solution to a problem by suggesting measures.
- Discuss causes of a problem and suggest solutions.

You are always expected to give reasons and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

How will I be assessed?

In both tasks you will be assessed on your ability to express yourself clearly and accurately in English.

In Task 1, your answer is assessed according to your ability to write about data in an organized way and compare information where it is relevant to do so. You should write about the main features of the data and add relevant detail where necessary.

In Task 2, your answer is assessed according to your ability to write in a logical manner as you give a solution to a problem, present and justify an opinion, compare and contrast evidence and opinions or evaluate and challenge ideas or arguments.

How much time should I spend on each task?

You are advised to spend 20 minutes on Task 1.

You are advised to spend 40 minutes on Task 2.

Even though Task 2 carries more marks, you should always do Task 1 first. This is because it is shorter, and psychologically it feels better if you have completed one task.

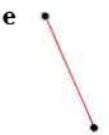
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Change and consequences

UNIT AIMS

TASK 1 Describing trends
Using nouns to summarize
Understanding data

TASK 2 Understanding questions
Expressing solutions
Using linking devices
Using trigger words



TASK 1 Describing trends

1 Name items 1–4 above.

2 The sales of items can rise and fall. List four other verbs you know for *rise* and *fall*.

Rise _____

Fall _____

3 The graphs a–h relate to sales of media technology.

Which graph do you think shows sales for each item in the photos 1–4?

4 Match each graph (a–h) with the most appropriate description (1–10) below. Some graphs will be used more than once.

1 Sales of audio cassettes fell steadily. _____

2 iPod sales rose gradually. _____

3 Plasma TV sales fluctuated wildly, but the trend was upward. _____

4 Sales of video cassettes fluctuated wildly and the trend was downward. _____

5 Total digital camera sales dropped slightly. _____

6 Sales of audio cassettes fell and then levelled off. _____

7 The sales of tablets rose gradually and then climbed sharply. _____

8 Purchases of video cassette recorders declined dramatically. _____

9 Sales of games consoles decreased and then levelled off. _____

10 CD sales dropped suddenly. _____

5 Underline all the verbs in exercise 4 used to describe trends.

Example

1 Sales of audio cassettes fell steadily.

6 In the sentences in exercise 4, adverbs such as *steadily* describe the verbs.

Find the adverbs and decide whether they mean slow or fast changes.

Complete the lists below.

Slow _____

Fast _____

Using nouns to summarize

1 Provide the noun form of the verbs below.

fall ■ rise ■ increase ■ decline ■ drop ■ fluctuate ■ improve ■ reduce ■ grow

Technique

Use nouns instead of verbs to summarize information and add variety to your writing. You can often rewrite sentences containing verb phrases such as *fell steadily* by using the correct form of *there is/are* and the correct use of the appropriate noun.

Examples

The consumption of chocolate *fell steadily*. (verb + adverb)

There was a *steady fall* in the consumption of chocolate. (*there was a* + adjective + noun)

There has been a *dramatic rise* in the production of films. (*there has been a* + adjective + noun)

The production of films *has risen dramatically*. (verb + adverb)

2 Read the examples in the Technique box. Then rewrite sentences a–j below.

- a Spice exports from Africa fluctuated wildly over the period.

There were _____

- b The development of new products fell gradually.

There was _____

- c There has been a noticeable decrease in research investment.

Research investment _____

- d The purchases of tickets dropped significantly last month.

There was _____

- e On the Internet, the number of sites rose dramatically.

There was _____

- f There was a sudden decrease in the sale of mangos.

The sale _____

- g At the theme park, there were very slight fluctuations in the number of visitors.

The number _____

- h There was a gradual decline in sugar imports.

Sugar imports _____

- i The quality of food in supermarkets has increased slowly.

There has _____

- j The number of air travellers fluctuated remarkably.

There _____

3 Phrases such as *the consumption of chocolate* can often be rewritten as just two or three nouns. Read the examples below. Then find and rewrite eight other examples in exercise 2.

Examples

The consumption of chocolate can become *Chocolate consumption*.

The production of films can become *Film production*. (not *Films production*)

Technique

Include a variety of structures in your writing:
noun + noun (*sugar imports*)
and the noun + of + noun
(*the import of sugar*).

Understanding data

1 Look at the graph below and the Task 1 question.

What was the income in dollars for:

- a The Tea Room in January? _____
- b Internet Express in July? _____
- c Wi-fi Café in November? _____
- d Café Cool in December? _____
- e The Tea Room in February? _____

In which month did:

- f Café Cool earn the most money? _____
- g Wi-fi Café earn the least money? _____

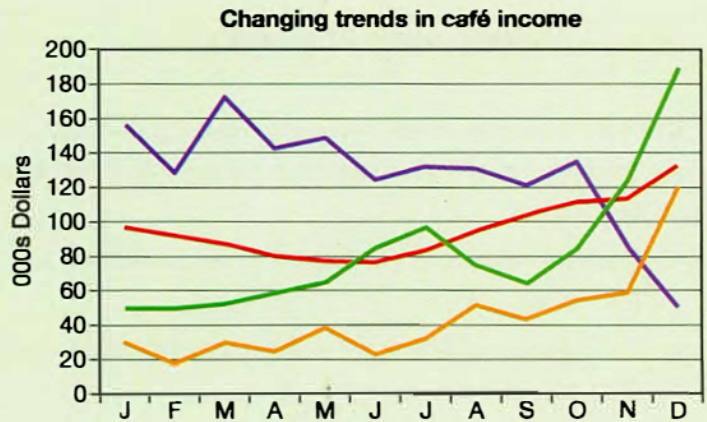
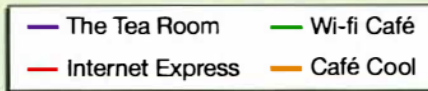
Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The graph shows the income of four cafés in New York over last year.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features. Make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.



2 Answer these questions about the graph.

- a What do the letters J, F, M, etc, along the bottom of the graph mean?
- b What does 000s mean?
- c What patterns can you see?
- d What comparisons can you make?

Technique

Write the names of the cafés at the end of each line to help you read the graph.

3 Read the text below and decide whether each of the seven missing phrases is a verb, a noun or an adverb.

Example

1 adverb

The graph provides information about the income trends of four cafés over the last year.

Overall, although the income for all four cafés showed some fluctuation from month to month, we can identify some general upward and downward trends. As regards the earnings for The Tea Room, they were down over the year, falling 1 _____ from almost \$160,000 earnings a month to around \$50,000 in December.

By contrast, the income for the other three cafés went up by varying degrees. There was 2 _____ in Café Cool's sales over the first ten months, followed by a sudden increase to \$120,000. Furthermore, the income for both Internet Express and the Wi-fi Café 3 _____ in December. The former experienced 4 _____ to June but, after that, income rose 5 _____, ending the year at approximately \$130,000. Likewise, the trend for Wi-fi Café was upward. Between January and July, earnings 6 _____ from \$50,000 to nearly \$100,000 and 7 _____ to around \$190,000.

It is noticeable that the income for The Tea Room is lower in the winter months than for the other three cafés.

4 Match options a–g with gaps 1–7 in the text. Use the graph to help you.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| a steadily | e also went up |
| b then rocketed | f a steady fall |
| c doubled | g a rise |
| d significantly | |

5 Find the following in the text in exercise 3.

- A phrase to introduce a new item on the graph.
- A phrase to show you are going to talk about a different trend from the one in the previous sentence.
- Two phrases to show you are going to talk about a similar trend to the one in the previous sentence.

TASK 2 Understanding questions

1 In each group a–d below, which general noun has a different meaning from the other two?

- advantages drawbacks benefits
- measures steps reasons
- causes effects consequences
- disadvantages drawbacks solutions

Technique

Learn to analyse Task 2 questions. They contain a general subject and often include a general noun or nouns to help you organize your essay, e.g. *The world is changing rapidly* (general subject). *What are the causes* (general noun to help you organize your answer) *of this?*

2 Complete each Task 2 question below with the general nouns and verbs from the box. You may use each item more than once.

agree or disagree ■ advantages ■ disadvantages ■ causes
solutions ■ measures ■ views ■ benefits

- What are the benefits of learning skills in the modern world?
- Any attempts to preserve the natural world will always hinder economic development. However the benefits of helping the environment will always far outweigh the _____. Do you _____?
- Some young people take a year off between school and university. What are the _____ and _____ of taking such time off?
- Students should be trained on how to cope with changes in the modern world. How far do you _____?
- Volunteer work with disadvantaged groups like underprivileged children is the best way for young people to learn about the real world. To what extent do you _____? What other _____ could be effective?
- Every day, animals are becoming extinct throughout the world. What do you think the _____ of this are? What _____ can you suggest to deal with this?
- Some people think overcrowding in large cities can be reduced by building skyscrapers, while others think the problem can be solved by encouraging people to move to the countryside. Discuss both these _____ and give your own opinion.

3 How many parts are there in each question in exercise 2? For example, (a) has one part. If there are two or three parts, how are they related?

Technique

Number the parts of the task and tick them as you do them.