

Collins | English for Exams

WRITING FOR IELTS

Anneli Williams



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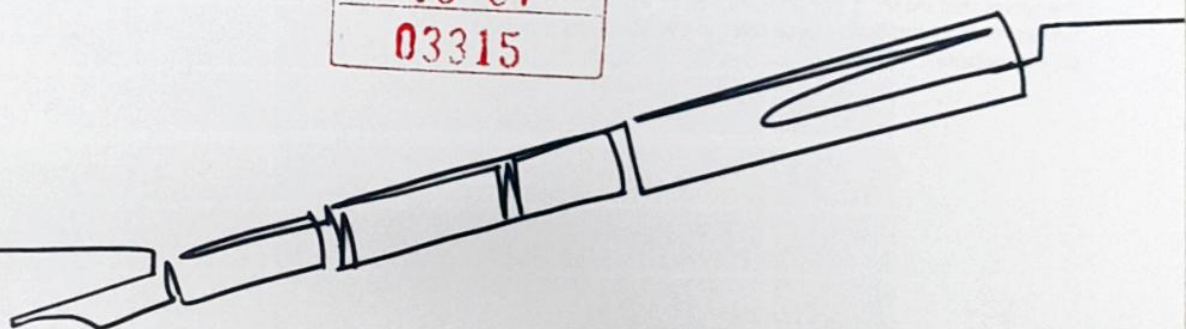
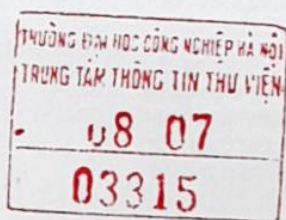
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THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH

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Sample IELTS Writing answer sheets (pages 143–4): Reproduced with permission of Cambridge Assessment English © UCLES 2019

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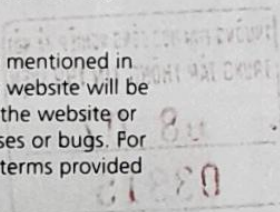
All exam-style questions and sample answers in this title were written by the author.

About the author

Anneli Williams has taught English for Academic Purposes at the University of Glasgow for over 24 years, developing extensive experience preparing students for the IELTS examination as well as for academic study within university settings.

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Introduction

Who is this book for?

Writing for IELTS will prepare you for the IELTS Writing test whether you are taking the test for the first time or re-sitting the test. It has been written for learners with band score 5–5.5 who are trying to achieve band score 6.5 or higher.

The structured approach, comprehensive answer key and model answers have been designed so that you can use the materials to study on your own. However, the book can also be used as a supplementary writing skills course for IELTS preparation classes. The book provides enough material for approximately 50 hours of classroom time.

Content

Writing for IELTS is divided into 12 units. Each unit focuses on a topic area that you are likely to encounter in the IELTS Writing test. This helps you to build up a bank of vocabulary and ideas related to a variety of the topics.

Units 1–11 cover the key stages of the writing process: everything from analysing the task to proof-reading a completed response. Every exercise is relevant to the exam. The aims listed at the start of each unit specify the key skills, techniques and language covered in the unit. You work towards Unit 12, which provides a final practice IELTS Writing test.

Additionally, the book provides exam strategies telling you what to expect and how best to succeed in the exam. *Exam information* is presented in clear, easy-to-read boxes. *Exam tips* in each unit highlight essential exam techniques and can be rapidly reviewed at a glance.

There are also *Watch out* boxes that will help you avoid common errors made in the exam. Finally, the *Exam tutor* at the end of each unit gives you the opportunity to revise and consolidate the exam skills you have studied.

Unit structure

Each of the first 11 units is divided into three parts.

Part 1 Language development introduces vocabulary related to the topic as well as some of the most common academic words and expressions needed for the writing functions covered in the unit. A range of exercises gives you the opportunity to use the vocabulary in a variety of contexts. These exercises also build awareness of the patterns in words and language items. The vocabulary is presented using Collins COBUILD dictionary definitions.

Part 2 Exam skills provides step-by-step exercises and guidance on the key stages of the writing process. There are guided questions and worked examples to show you what an effective IELTS Writing response looks like. Useful expressions and grammatical forms are highlighted, and there are exercises that help you develop good range and accuracy in your writing. You are encouraged to apply what you have learnt, while at the same time writing your own responses to task questions. *Exam information* and *Exam tips* show you how to approach each task type and will help you develop successful test-taking strategies.

Part 3 Exam practice provides exam practice questions for Task 1 and Task 2 in a format that follows the actual exam. You can use this as a means of assessing your readiness for the actual exam. There is also an *Exam tutor* checklist after the exam practice that will help you revise and consolidate key points to improve your writing.

Answer key

A comprehensive answer key is provided for all sections of the book, including recommended answers and explanations for more open-ended writing tasks. There are model answers for all of the writing questions. For one of the practice exam questions in each unit, two model answers are given – one of them annotated. This shows you that a variety of approaches to each writing task can be taken.

Using the book for self-study

If you are new to IELTS, we recommend that you work systematically through the 12 units in order to benefit from its progressive structure. If you are a more experienced learner, you can use the aims listed at the start of each unit to select the most useful exercises.

Each unit contains between three to four hours of self-study material. Having access to someone who can provide informed feedback on the writing practice exercises is an advantage. However, you can still learn a lot working alone, or with a study partner willing to give and receive peer feedback.

Part 1: Language development

Ideally, you should begin each unit by working through the *Part 1: Language development* exercises. Try to answer the questions without looking at a dictionary in order to develop the skill of inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words from context.

Part 2: Exam skills

Work through the *Part 2: Exam skills* from beginning to end. It is important to study the *Exam information* and *Exam tips* about each of the question types, so that you become familiar with how to approach the different writing tasks in the exam. Doing this will also help you develop more general writing skills. The grammar points covered should be thoroughly mastered so that during the actual exam you can focus on the higher-order skills of planning and effectively communicating your response.

Part 3: Exam practice

This section contains exam practice with timed questions. This gives you the opportunity to practise writing to a time limit. If you find this difficult at first, you could focus first on writing a high-quality response of the correct length. Then you could start to reduce the time allowed gradually until you are able to write an acceptable answer within the time limit. Model answers should be studied to identify the underlying approach and effect on the reader. Try not to memorise essays or reports or to attempt to fit a pre-existing response around another exam question. If you work systematically through the book, you should develop the skills and language to effectively express your own responses to unseen exam questions on the day.

Unit 12 Practice exam

This is a complete practice Writing exam. This unit should be done under exam conditions.

Using the book in the classroom

If you are a teacher, you can use *Writing for IELTS* either as your main IELTS coursebook or as a supplementary course. Detailed teacher's notes for each unit are available at: www.nhantriviet.com/collinsielts.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test

IELTS is jointly managed by the British Council, Cambridge ESOL Examinations and IDP Education, Australia. There are two versions of the test:

- Academic
- General Training

Academic is for students wishing to study at undergraduate or postgraduate levels in an English-medium environment. General Training is for people who wish to migrate to an English-speaking country. This book is primarily for students taking the Academic version.

The test

There are four modules:

- Listening** 30 minutes, plus 10 minutes for transferring answers to the answer sheet.
NB: the audio is heard *only once*.
Approx. 10 questions per section
Section 1: two speakers discuss a social situation
Section 2: one speaker talks about a non-academic topic
Section 3: up to four speakers discuss an educational project
Section 4: one speaker gives a talk of general academic interest
- Reading** 60 minutes
3 texts, taken from authentic sources, on general, academic topics. They may contain diagrams, charts, etc.
40 questions: may include multiple choice, sentence completion, completing a diagram, graph or chart, choosing headings, yes/no/not given, true/false/not given, classification and matching.
- Writing** Task 1: 20 minutes: description of a table, chart, graph or diagram (150 words minimum)
Task 2: 40 minutes: an essay in response to an argument or problem (250 words minimum)
- Speaking** 11–14 minutes
A three-part face-to-face oral interview with an examiner. The interview is recorded.
Part 1: introductions and general questions (4–5 mins)
Part 2: individual long turn (3–4 mins) – the candidate is given a task, has one minute to prepare, then talks for 1–2 minutes, with some questions from the examiner.
Part 3: two-way discussion (4–5 mins): the examiner asks further questions on the topic from Part 2, and gives the candidate the opportunity to discuss more abstract issues or ideas.
- Timetabling** Listening, Reading and Writing must be taken on the same day, and in the order listed above. Speaking can be taken up to 7 days before or after the other modules.
- Scoring** Each section is given a band score. The average of the four scores produces the Overall Band Score. You do not pass or fail IELTS; you receive a score.

IELTS and the Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR shows the level of the learner and is used for many English as a Foreign Language examinations. The table below shows the approximate CEFR level and the equivalent IELTS Overall Band Score:

| CEFR description | CEFR level | IELTS Band Score |
|---|------------|------------------|
| Proficient user (Advanced) | C2 C1 | 9 7–8 |
| Independent user (Intermediate – Upper Intermediate) | B2 B1 | 5–6.5 4–5 |

This table contains the general descriptors for the band scores 1–9:

| IELTS Band Scores | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 9 | Expert user | Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding. |
| 8 | Very good user | Has fully operational command of the language, with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well. |
| 7 | Good user | Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning. |
| 6 | Competent user | Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations. |
| 5 | Modest user | Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field. |
| 4 | Limited user | Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language. |
| 3 | Extremely limited user | Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur. |
| 2 | Intermittent user | No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English. |
| 1 | Non user | Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words. |
| 0 | Did not attempt the test | No assessable information provided. |

Marking

The Listening and Reading papers have 40 items, each worth one mark if correctly answered. Here are some examples of how marks are translated into band scores:

| | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Listening: | 16 out of 40 correct answers: | band score 5 |
| | 23 out of 40 correct answers: | band score 6 |
| | 30 out of 40 correct answers: | band score 7 |
| Reading: | 15 out of 40 correct answers: | band score 5 |
| | 23 out of 40 correct answers: | band score 6 |
| | 30 out of 40 correct answers: | band score 7 |

Writing and Speaking are marked according to performance descriptors.

Writing: examiners award a band score for each of four areas with equal weighting:

- Task achievement (Task 1)
- Task response (Task 2)
- Coherence and cohesion
- Lexical resource and grammatical range and accuracy

Speaking: examiners award a band score for each of four areas with equal weighting:

- Fluency and coherence
- Lexical resource
- Grammatical range
- Accuracy and pronunciation

For full details of how the examination is scored and marked, go to: www.ielts.org.