

How Writing is Assessed

The Academic and General Training Writing tests both consist of two tasks, Task 1 and Task 2. Each task is assessed independently.

Writing performance is assessed by certificated examiners who are appointed by the test centre and approved by the British Council or IDP: IELTS Australia.

The examiner rates the candidate's responses using detailed performance descriptors which describe writing performance at the nine IELTS bands. These descriptors apply to both the Academic and General Training Writing tests.

Task 1 responses are assessed on the following four criteria:

Task Achievement

This criterion refers to how appropriately, accurately and relevantly the response fulfils the requirements of the task. Responses must be at least 150 words in length.

Academic Writing Task 1 is an information-transfer task with a defined response which requires candidates to draw on the factual content of a diagram. Candidates are not expected to speculate or explain any areas that lie outside the input material.

General Training Writing Task 1 is also a task with a defined response which requires candidates to write a letter in response to an everyday situation or problem. The input material describes the context and purpose of the letter and the functions candidates should cover in their responses.

Coherence and Cohesion

This criterion refers to the overall clarity and fluency of the message: how the response organises and links information, ideas and language. Coherence refers to the linking of ideas through logical sequencing. Cohesion refers to the varied and appropriate use of cohesive devices (for example, logical connectors, pronouns and conjunctions) to assist in making the references and relationships between and within sentences clear.

Lexical Resource

This criterion refers to the range of vocabulary the candidate uses and the accuracy and appropriacy of that use.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

This criterion refers to the range and accurate use of the candidate's grammatical resource at sentence level.

Task 2 responses are assessed on the following four criteria:

Task Response

This criterion refers to the candidate's ability to formulate and develop a position in relation to a question or statement. Ideas should be supported by evidence, and examples may be drawn from the candidate's own experience. Responses must be at least 250 words in length.

Coherence and Cohesion

As for Task 1.

Lexical Resource

As for Task 1.

Grammatical Range and Accuracy

As for Task 1.

All criteria have equal weighting.

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

Candidates should note that they will lose marks in Writing if their responses are a) under the minimum word length, b) partly or wholly plagiarised, c) not written as full, connected text (e.g. if the response is in note form, if bullet points are used etc).

The public version of the Writing band descriptors is available on the IELTS website www.ielts.org