



## CHEAT SHEET · ADULTS AND STUDENTS

# IELTS Writing and Speaking Toolkit

What the examiner is actually marking, how to structure both writing tasks, and phrases that lift Lexical Resource and Coherence without sounding memorised.

IELTS

English

## 01 The test

| Part      | Time             | What you do                                                                      |
|-----------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Listening | About 30 minutes | 4 recordings, 40 questions                                                       |
| Reading   | 60 minutes       | 3 passages, 40 questions                                                         |
| Writing   | 60 minutes       | Task 1 (at least 150 words) and Task 2 (at least 250 words; worth twice as much) |
| Speaking  | 11-14 minutes    | 3 parts, face to face with an examiner                                           |

## 02 Band scores

**Scale** – 0 to 9 in half bands

**Overall** – the average of the four parts, rounded to the nearest half band

**Writing criteria** – Task Achievement (Task 1) or Task Response (Task 2); Coherence and Cohesion; Lexical Resource; Grammatical Range and Accuracy

**Speaking criteria** – Fluency and Coherence; Lexical Resource; Grammatical Range and Accuracy; Pronunciation

## 03 Writing Task 1 (Academic)

**Structure** – introduction (paraphrase the question) → overview (two main trends, no numbers) → two detail paragraphs with data

**Trends** – rose sharply, climbed steadily, peaked at, fell slightly, levelled off, remained stable

**Proportions** – accounted for, made up, roughly a quarter, just over half, the vast majority

**Comparisons** – twice as high as, considerably lower than, by contrast, whereas

## 04 Writing Task 2

**Structure** – introduction with your position → body 1 (main reason + example) → body 2 → conclusion

**Question types** – opinion; discuss both views; advantages and disadvantages; problem and solution; two-part questions

**Answer every part** – underline each part of the question and tick it off as you write

**Examples** – specific and believable beat long and vague

## 05 Linking words

**Adding** – furthermore, moreover, in addition

**Contrasting** – however, on the other hand, nevertheless

**Cause and result** – therefore, as a result, consequently

**Examples** – for instance, such as, a case in point is

**Concluding** – in conclusion, overall, on balance

## 06 Speaking

**Part 1** – 4-5 minutes on familiar topics; give two or three sentences, not one word

**Part 2** – one minute to prepare, then speak for up to two minutes from the cue card

**Part 3** – 4-5 minutes of discussion; give reasons, compare and speculate

**Fluency** – it is fine to pause to think; avoid memorised scripts

## 07 Errors that cost bands

**Articles** – missing 'a', 'an' or 'the'

**Agreement** – 'people is', 'the number of students are'

**Informal writing** – contractions and slang in essays

**Under length** – Task 1 under 150 or Task 2 under 250 words loses marks

### How to use this sheet

- 1 Plan each essay for five minutes before writing; it improves coherence more than anything else.
- 2 Record your Speaking answers and listen back for repeated words.
- 3 Learn ten topic words for common themes: education, environment, technology, health, work.

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