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General Hints for IELTS

What to do in the weeks leading up to the test

- Become familiar with the test as early as possible. The skills being tested in IELTS take a period of time to build up. Cramming is not an effective study technique for IELTS.
- Use your study time efficiently; study when you are fresh, and after you have planned a timetable, make sure that you keep to it. Set goals and ensure that you have adequate breaks. In the IELTS test, each of the four Band Modules — Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking — carries the same weight. Study each skill carefully and spend more time on the skills in which you feel you are weak.
- Be aware of the exact procedure for the test. Be very clear on the order of each section, its length and the specific question types. There are many resources available to help you practice these skills.
- Having a study partner or a study group is an excellent idea. Other students may raise issues that you may not have considered.
- Seek help from teachers, friends and native English speakers. Contact [IELTS experts for advice](#). If you must, ask for a quick online course.

Days before the test

This is not a time for intensive study. It is a time to review skills and your test techniques. It is important to exercise, eat, rest and sleep well during the week in which you will take the test.

Leave nothing to chance. If you do not know how to get to the test centre, try going there at a similar time one or two weeks before the real test.



The night before the test

You must have a good dinner and go to bed at your normal time — not too early and not too late, as you do not want to disrupt your sleep pattern if possible.

Have everything ready that you need to take with you to the test so you can simply pick it up in the morning, for example, the test registration form, passport, test number, pens, pencils, erasers, etc. A pen that runs dry or a pencil that breaks can take several minutes to replace. Check before the exam exactly what articles you need. Set your alarm clock the night before or arrange a wake-up call.

On the morning of the test

Eat a good breakfast. You will have several hours of concentration ahead of you and you will need food and drink in the morning. You may even want to bring more food or a snack with you, especially if your speaking test is at a later time that day. You cannot, however, take food or drink into the exam room. If possible, wear a watch in case you cannot see the clock in the exam room. It is essential that you keep track of time.

Give yourself plenty of time to get to the test centre. You may be required to complete a registration form and to show your passport before you enter the examination room so you must arrive at the time specified by your test centre. If you are early, you could go for a walk. If you are late, you will not be allowed to enter. Avoid the added tension of having to rush.

During the test

Most students at the test will feel nervous. This is quite normal. In fact, it can actually be quite helpful in terms of motivation. It may make you alert and help you to focus. The aim is for you to try to perform at your optimum level.

In contrast, high levels of anxiety can affect a student's performance. However, much of this anxiety can be overcome by good preparation, familiarity with test details and a positive attitude.

The examination room should be suitable for testing, that is, the lighting, ventilation and temperature should be appropriate. If you are uncomfortable because of any of these factors or if there is some other problem, such as not being able to hear the recording of the Listening Module, make sure you ask the person in charge to do something about it. For example, you may ask to change seats.

Examination techniques

- Remember that every section is marked independently. Do not jeopardise your performance in one section just because you believe that you have done badly in

another. Do not underestimate or try to predict your outcome. You may, in fact, have done better than you imagined.

- Focus on what you know rather than on what you don't know while you are doing the test.
- Ensure that you adhere to the times suggested as they usually correspond to the number of marks given for a particular question.
- In the Listening and Reading Modules, it is a good idea to write down an answer, even if you are not sure of it, before moving on to the next question. Many students intend to return to the answers they have omitted at the end of the test but do not have enough time to do so. Furthermore, by writing your best answer at the actual time of reading the question, you save the time you need to spend again on re-reading the question and re-acquainting yourself with the subject matter. If you are not confident about your answer, mark it in some way and return to it at the end.
- Do not leave any answers blank. You are not penalised for incorrect answers, so 'guess' wisely.



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