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Tips for the Writing section

What to do in the listening test

TASK ONE

In Task 1 of the Writing Module, you are given about 20 minutes to write a minimum of 150 words. You are asked to look at a diagram, table, graph or short piece of text and describe the information in your own words. There are three important steps you should follow:

- preparation
- writing
- editing

These steps will help you to write a coherent and well organised essay in the time given.

Preparation (about 2 minutes)

You need to spend 2-3 minutes working out exactly what you are going to do. You should pay attention to the following points:

- Study the question carefully.
- Think carefully about the topic. Outline some pertinent points.
- Ensure that your ideas are arranged logically.

Writing (about 15 minutes)

When writing an Academic Task 1 report, include:



- introduction
- body paragraphs (1-3)
- conclusion

To learn how to write a General Training task 1, read [the rules of standard letter and email writing](#).

Editing (about 2 minutes)

Make sure that you have followed the instructions carefully. Be sure that you have written what you intended and that no important ideas are missing.

In the last few minutes, check for obvious errors, such as spelling or grammatical errors.

TASK TWO

All too often students begin planning or even writing their answers in the IELTS Writing Module before they understand what is actually expected of them. Following the steps below will help you to plan a well-structured and coherent essay that addresses the given task.

Preparation

You may wish to spend about 5-7 minutes working out exactly what you are going to do. There are five steps to consider.

- Study the question carefully. Most task statements or questions have a key instructional word or words telling you what to do. Note these words with a highlighting pen.

There are also key topic words which point to the most important parts of the question. Underline those words too. Ask yourself how the key words relate to the given instruction.

- Think carefully about the topic. How do you feel about it?
- Establish a point of view and list some points for development. The answer normally takes the form of a short essay. The word 'essay' comes from an old French word *essai* which meant 'to attempt or try out', or 'to test'. In an IELTS Writing Module Task 2 answer, your purpose is to develop your point of view in a convincing way.
- Decide which points will be written as topic sentences. Think about how they will develop into paragraphs.
- Ensure that your points are arranged in a logical order.

Writing

When you are writing a Task 2 answer, a structure based on the following elements could be used.

Introductory paragraph

The introduction of a Task 2 answer should begin with a general statement that takes into account the key topic words or their synonyms. The last sentence of the introduction should include a thesis statement which shows the point of view or direction that will be taken in the answer (e.g. opinion, discussion, pros and cons, causes, effects, etc.).

Body paragraphs

Body paragraphs each consist of several sentences that are arranged in a logical way to develop a main idea. You can expect to write about 2-4 body paragraphs for a Task 2 answer. Each of these contains an appropriate connective word to ensure a smooth transition between paragraphs. This connector is then put in a topic sentence which is the main point of the paragraph clearly stated in a sentence. Every sentence in the paragraph must be directly related to it. Try to develop every paragraph adequately. This may be done through the use of examples, explanations, detail, logical inference, cause and effect or making comparisons or contrasts. There are many different ways to organise your ideas for body paragraphs. Be confident of the ideas you choose.

The conclusion

A good conclusion serves several purposes:

- It indicates the end of your essay.
- It gives your final thoughts and assessments on the essay subject.
- It weighs up the points in your essay and should strengthen your thesis statement.
- Do not simply repeat your opening paragraph. This appears too mechanical and superficial.

Editing (about 3-5 minutes)

In the last few minutes, you should check for obvious errors, such as spelling or grammatical errors. Be sure you have written what you intended and that there are no important ideas missing.



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