

IELTS

WRITING

RIGHT TASK 1

Question Types

In General Training Writing Task 1 you will be asked to write a letter of at least 150 words. Although General Training Writing Task 1 is somewhat easier than Academic Writing Task 1, it is still a challenge for most candidates and there are still several different question types that you must prepare for.

Firstly, you should practice writing letters to people you know and also to people you do not know. Letters to people you know should have an informal, friendly style, whereas letters to people you do not know should be more formal. Therefore, this section highlights some of the differences between informal and formal English.

You should also practice writing letters with different purposes. You must be able to write letters of request, complaint, enquiry, apology, explanation and thanks. Do not forget that many letters have several purposes: for example, you may wish to complain about poor service you received at a hotel and request an apology or explanation.

The following are examples of the two main question types you are likely to face, taken from the model questions below.

1. Formal Letter

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You recently went to Australia for a holiday. However, your return flight was delayed by a day.

Write a letter to the airline company. In your letter:

- *Introduce yourself*
- *Complain about the delay*
- *Explain the problems that it caused you*
- *Ask for a letter of apology and / or some form of compensation*

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear ...,

2. Informal Letter

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

An old friend of yours is coming to visit your city. You had planned to meet him at the airport, but something has come up and you will not be able to make it there on time.

Write to your friend. In your letter

- *Explain the situation*
- *Offer to make alternate arrangements*

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear ...,

Formal Letter

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Question 21 | Internet Connection Problems |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You are a university student living in on-campus accommodation. You are having some problems with the internet connection in your room.

Write to the supervisor of your residence. In your letter

- *Introduce yourself*
- *Inform him / her of the situation*
- *Request that the problem be fixed*

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear ...,

Model Answer A: IELTS Band 5⁺

Dear Harold,

I'm Jenny Chen – a new overseas student now staying in Unit 5 of Cassowary House. So far I've found it pretty comfortable here, but I'm not totally satisfied with the university's internet system. Your student accommodation brochure said that I would have full internet access in my room, but when I tried to use MSN Messenger and other communication programs they didn't work properly. I talked to some of my housemates about the problem and they told me that the university has actually blocked these programs. I'm sure you realise that international phone calls are very expensive compared to chatting online. I think it's really unfair to stop overseas students like me from finding cheaper ways to keep in touch with our friends and family at home, especially since we pay such high tuition fees. Could you please unblock these programs so that we can use them? Thanks very much for your help.

Regards,

Jenny Chen

(158 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS Band 7⁺

Dear Mr Jones,

My name is Jenny Chen – a recently arrived overseas student currently staying in Unit 5 of Cassowary House. While I have found most of the facilities here quite satisfactory thus far, I wish to lodge a complaint about the university's internet system. Your student accommodation brochure, which I read closely prior to booking this room, indicated that I would have unlimited access to the Internet. Upon arrival, however, I discovered that MSN Messenger and other such internet communication programs would not run properly. I discussed the matter with some of my fellow students who informed me that these programs had been blocked by the university. As you are no doubt aware, international phone calls are incredibly expensive by comparison with chatting online. Considering the high tuition fees we overseas students already pay, I feel it is entirely unreasonable to prevent us from seeking more affordable alternatives when it comes to communicating with loved ones at home. I was, therefore, wondering if you could unblock these programs? Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Chen

(181 words)

MODEL SENTENCE STRUCTURES

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|---|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I think most of the facilities here are pretty good, but I want to complain about the university's internet system. |
| | IELTS 6 | So far I have found most of the facilities here quite satisfactory. However, I wish to complain about the university's internet system. |
| | IELTS 7+ | While I have found most of the facilities here quite satisfactory thus far, I wish to lodge a complaint about the university's internet system. |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 5 | I read your student accommodation brochure before I booked this room. It said that I would have full internet access. |
| | IELTS 6 | I read your student accommodation brochure prior to booking this room and it indicated that I would have unlimited access to the Internet. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Your student accommodation brochure, which I read closely prior to booking this room, indicated that I would have unlimited access to the internet. |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | But when I arrived, I found out that MSN messenger and other internet communication programs did not work properly. |
| | IELTS 6 | However, upon arrival I found that MSN messenger and other similar internet communication programs would not work properly. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Upon arrival, however, I discovered that MSN messenger and other such internet communication programs would not run properly. |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | So could you please unblock these programs? |
| | IELTS 6 | Therefore, I was wondering if you could unblock these programs? |
| | IELTS 7+ | I was, therefore, wondering if you could unblock these programs? |
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 5 | Thanks very much for your help. |
| | IELTS 6 | I really appreciate your assistance in this matter. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| Basic | Intermediate | Advanced |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| New (adj.) | | Recently arrived |
| So far | | Thus far |
| Pretty (adv.) | Quite(adv.) | |
| Say (v.) | | Indicate (v.) |
| Work properly | Run properly | |
| Problem (n.) | | Matter (n.) |
| Tell (v.) | | Inform (v.) |
| | Realize (v.) | (be) aware |
| Very (adv.) | | Incredibly (adv.) |
| Compare to | | By comparison with |
| Unfair (adj.) | | Unreasonable (adj.) |
| Stop (v.) | | Prevent (v.) |
| Cheaper (adj.) | | More affordable |
| Keep in touch | Communicate (v.) | |
| | | |
| Help (n./v.) | | Assistance (v.) |

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions by circling A, B or C

1. Question 21 asks you to write a letter to:
 - a. Someone you know well
 - b. Someone you may have met but do not know well
 - c. Someone you have never met
2. This letter should be:
 - a. Friendly
 - b. Informal
 - c. Formal
3. The purpose of this letter is to:
 - a. Make an enquiry
 - b. Make a complaint
 - c. Make a complaint and a request
4. How does the writer start these two letters?
 - a. She introduces herself.
 - b. She says why she is writing.
 - c. She gives her contact details.
5. Which of the following is the most formal?
 - a. Make a complaint
 - b. Lodge a complaint
 - c. Complain

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

6. It is acceptable to use contractions like “I’m” and “didn’t” in formal letters.
7. The writer makes up extra details about the situation that are not included in the question.
8. The writer asks the supervisor of the residence to help her and then explains the situation.
9. “Considering” (see Model answer B) means “because of”.

10. **“Yours sincerely”** (see model answer B) is a good way to finish a letter if you do not know a person’s name and have never met him/her before.

CHECK YOUR ANSWER

1. **B**
you have probably met the supervisor for your residence before, but the question does not make this clear.
2. **C**
the letter should be formal because you do not know the person well. Therefore, Model Answer B is better.
3. **C**
You do not just want to complain. You also want the supervisor to do something about the situation.
4. **A**
It is usually a good idea to introduce yourself if you do not know the recipient well.
5. **B**
6. **NO**
Contractions should not be use in formal writing.
7. **YES**
It is very difficult to write this kind of letter without including detail. Use your imagination and make up a story.
8. **NO**
The writer explains the situation and then makes a request.
9. **YES**
“Considering” is better because it is more formal.
10. **NO**
“Yours sincerely” is usually used to sign off on a letter to someone whose name you know but you have never met.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You recently went to Australia for a holiday. However, your return flight was delayed by a day.

Write a letter to the airline company. In your letter

- **Introduce yourself.**
- **Complain about the delay**
- **Explain the problems that is caused you**
- **Ask for a letter of apology and/or some form of compensation.**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear....,

Model Answer A: IELTS Band 5+

To customer Service,

I am writing to you about a last-minute delay in a flight I took with your airline last week. I was supposed to fly to Sydney from Beijing on December 12 and come back on January 28. The first part of the trip was fine, but there was a problem on the way home. After I checked in, spent all the Australian dollars I had left in the airport duty-fee shops and went to the boarding lounge, I was told I would have to spend a night in Brunei on the way home. This was scheduled to start work the next day. Since your airline was to blame for this problem, I think you really should give me something to make up for it. Actually, I think it would be fair if you gave me a free return ticket to Australia. I've written my contact details at the top of the page. By the way, could you please deal with this quickly? Thanks.

Regards,
Tony Yu

(182 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS Brand 7⁺

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing with regard to an unexpected delay in a flight I took with your airline recently. I was initially booked to leave Beijing for Sydney on the 12th of December and return on the 28th of January. The first leg of the journey was uneventful enough. However, on arrival in the boarding lounge at Kingsford Smith Airport, I was informed that my return flight would be delayed by 14 hours and that I would have to spend one night in Brunei on my way back to Taiwan. This caused considerable inconvenience, not only to myself but also to my employers, as I was due to commence work again the following day. In fact, it almost cost me my job. Given the fact that this foul-up occurred at such short notice and was entirely the fault of your airline, I feel that compensation in the form of a complimentary ticket of the same distance would be warranted. I can be contacted at the address supplied. A swift response would be greatly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,
Tony Yu,

(179 words)

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|---|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I am writing to you about a last-minute delay in a flight I took with your airline last week. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am writing to you regarding an unexpected delay in a flight I took with your airline recently. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I am writing with regard to an unexpected delay in a flight I took with your airline recently. |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 5 | Originally, I booked a flight from Beijing to Sydney on December 14 and from Sydney to Beijing on January 28. |
| | IELTS 6 | Initially, I was booked to leave Beijing for Sydney on December 14 and come back on January 28. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I was initially booked to leave Beijing for Sydney on the 14 th of December and return on the 28 th of January. |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | Because this problem happened so suddenly and your airline was completely to blame, I think you should give me something to make up for it. |
| | IELTS 6 | Given the suddenness of the delay and the fact that your airline was entirely to blame for this foul-up, I feel that you should compensate me by giving me a free ticket of the same distance. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Given the fact that this foul-up occurred at such short notice and was entirely the fault of our airline, I feel that compensation in the form of a complimentary ticket of the same distance would be warranted. |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 6 | You can contact me at the address I have given |
| | IELTS 7+ | I can be contacted at the address supplied |
| Sentence 5 | | |
| | IELTS 6 | I would greatly appreciate a quick reply. |
| | IELTS 7+ | A swift response would be greatly appreciated. |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| Basic (informal) | Intermediate | Advanced |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| About (prep.) | | With regard to |
| Come back | Return (v.) | |
| Part of the trip | | Leg of the journey |
| | Trip (n.) | Journey (n.) |
| But (adv./conj.) | However (adv.) | |
| Tell (v.) | | Inform (v.) |
| Company (n.) | | Employers (n.) |
| Start (n./v.) | | Commence (v.) |
| Because (conj.) | | Since (conj.) Given the fact that |
| Problem (n.) | | Foul-up |
| Free (adj.) | | Complimentary (adj.) |

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions by circling A, B or C

1. Question 22 asks you to write to:
 - a. An acquaintance
 - b. A stranger
 - c. A friend
2. This letter should be:
 - a. Informal
 - b. Semi-formal
 - c. Formal
3. Which of the following is the best way to start a formal letter to someone if you do not know their name?
 - a. To customer service
 - b. To whom it may concern
 - c. Dear Sir/Madam
4. Which of the following should not be used in formal writing?
 - a. I feel
 - b. I believe
 - c. I think
5. Which of the following phrases is best in formal writing?
 - a. I am writing to you about...
 - b. I am writing with regard to...
 - c. I am writing this letter because I want to...

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

6. The question tells me what my flight dates were and where I travelled to.
7. The writer mentions the consequences of the flight delay before making his request.
8. **“By the way”** (see Model Answer A) is informal and should only be used in speaking.
9. **“Yours faithfully”** is used to sign off when you know a person’s name, but have never met him/her before.

CHECK YOUR ANSWER

1. **B**

This is not mentioned in the question, but it is unlikely that you have met the person you are writing to. In any case, you certainly do not know him/her well.

2. **C**

This is a serious letter to someone you do not know well.

3. **C**

This is the normal way to start a formal letter if you do not know the recipient’s name

4. **C**

“I think” is often used in speaking.

5. **B**

6. **NO**

The writer made these details up. Be creative-try making up extra detail to make your letter sound more nature.

7. **YES**

The writer explains the problem and its consequences and then asks for compensation.

8. **YES**

“By the way” is for speaking and informal writing. It is not for formal writing.

9. **NO**

“Yours faithfully” is a good way to sign off if you do not know the other person’s name.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You rented a car recently, but were not satisfied with it.

Write a letter of complaint to the rental agency. In your letter

- **Introduce yourself**
- **Explain what went wrong with the car you rented**
- **Ask for some form of compensation.**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear...,

Model Answer A: IELTS Band 5+

Dear Sir,

I'm writing because I was not very happy with a car I hired from your company a few weeks ago. When I picked it up from your city office, I saw that there was lots of smoke coming from the back. I told your employee, Rich, that I need a reliable car because I was going to drive it a long way. He promised me that the car was fine and said I wouldn't have any problems with it. But when I drove it in the country it broke down and I got stuck 200 kilometers from the nearest town. And do you know what happened next? The air conditioner broke. It was terrible. After I waited for help and then waited for the car to be fixed, I had to drive it without an air conditioner in the middle of summer. I rented that car because of what your employee said so I think you should give me my money back. Anyway, I've written my phone number and address at the top of the page. Could you deal with this quickly please? Thank you.

Regards,
Jamie Wang

(190 words)

Model Answers B: IELTS Band 7+

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this letter in order to complain about a car that I rented from your agency recently. When I collected it from your city branch, I noticed clouds of smoke coming from the exhaust pipe. I told your representative that I required a dependable vehicle as I would be making a long journey, and he assured me that I would not have any mechanical difficulties with it. However, as soon as I took it for a longer trip it broke down, leaving me stranded 200 kilometers from the nearest town. To make matters worse, the air conditioning stopped working as well. Consequently, after several hours of waiting, first for help and then for repairs, I had to drive on in the summer heat. Since I rented this car on your representative's advice, I feel that I am entitled to request a full refund. I can be contacted at the address or phone number provided. I would greatly appreciate your prompt resolution of this matter.

Yours faithfully,
Jamie Wang

(171 words)

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|---|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I am writing because I want to complain about a car I rented from your company a few weeks ago. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am writing this letter to complain about a car I rented from your agency recently. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I am writing this letter in order to complain about a car that I rented from your company recently. |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 6 | When I picked it up from your city office, I saw that there was smoke coming from the exhaust pipe. |
| | IELTS 7+ | When I collected it from your city branch, I noticed clouds of smoke coming from the exhaust pipe. |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | I told your employee I needed a car that would not break down because I wanted to drive it a long way, and he promised me that I would not have any problems with it. |
| | IELTS 6 | I told your representative that I required a reliable car as I would be driving it a long way, and he assured me that I would not have any mechanical problems with it. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I told your representative that I required a dependable vehicle as I would be making a long journey, and he assured me that I would not have any mechanical difficulties with it. |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | So after I spent several hours waiting for help and repairs, I had to keep driving in really hot weather. |
| | IELTS 6 | Consequently, after I spent several hours waiting, first for help and then for repairs, I had to continue driving in the hot sun. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Consequently, after several hours of waiting, first for help and then for repairs, I had to drive on in the summer heat. |

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|--|
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 5 | Because of your employee convinced me to rent this car, I think you should give me my money back. |
| | IELTS 6 | Since your representative convinced me to rent this car I feel it is my right to ask for a full refund. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Since I rented this car on your representative's advice, I feel that I am entitled to request a full refund. |
| Sentence 6 | IELTS 5 | Could you please deal with this matter quickly? |
| | IELTS 6 | I would appreciate it if you could resolve this matter promptly. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I would greatly appreciate your prompt resolution of this matter. |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| Basic (informal) | Intermediate | Advanced (formal) |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Hire (v.) Rent (v.) | |
| Company (n.) | Agency (n.) | |
| A few weeks ago | Recently (adv.) | |
| Pick up | Collect (v.) | |
| City office | City branch | |
| See (v.) | Notice (v.) | |
| | Employee (n.) | Representative (n.) |
| | Promise (n./v.) | Assure (v.) |
| | | Dependable (adj.) Reliable (adj.) |
| Car (n.) | | Vehicle (n.) |
| | Trip (n.) | Journey (n.) |
| But (adv. /conj.) | However (adv.) | |
| So (adv. /conj.) | | Consequently (adv.) |
| Because (conj.) | | Since (conj.) |
| Deal with | | Resolve (v.) |
| Quick (adj.) | | Prompt (adj.) |

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions by circling A, B or C

1. Question 23 asks you to write:
 - A. A formal letter to someone you know
 - B. An informal letter to someone you do not know
 - C. A formal letter to someone you do not know well.

Question 2 – 3 refer to the following four simplified sentences taken from the model answers.

- i. However, when I took it for a longer trip it broke down.
- ii. Your employee told me that the car I rented would not have any problems
- iii. I wish to complain about a car that I rented from your agency recently.

iv. Therefore, I feel that you should give me my money back.

2. Put the above sentences in the correct order.
 - A. i./ii./iii./iv.
 - B. iv./ii./iii./i.
 - C. iii./ii./i./iv.
3. Which of these sentences says why the writer wrote the letter?
 - A. i.
 - B. ii.
 - C. iii.
 - D. iv.
4. In Model Answer B, the word “*since*” means:
 - A. After
 - B. Because
 - C. When

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

5. “*Dear Sir*” (see Model Answer A) is a good way to start any formal letter if you do not know the person you are writing to.
6. Past tense is used in this letter.
7. “*And*” is a good way to start a sentence (see Model Answer A).
8. “*And do you know what happened next?*” (See Model Answer A) is too informal for this letter and sounds silly.
9. “*Had to*” (see both model answers) is the past tense of “*have to*”.
10. “*Resolution*” is the noun for “*resolve*” (see Model Answer B).

CHECK YOUR ANSWER

1. C

It asks you to write to the rental agency, so the letter is formal. Model Answer B is better.

2. **C**

The writer explains why he is writing, gives background information and then makes a request. This is a logical way to organize this kind of letter.

3. **C**

4. **B**

“since” sometimes means *“after”*, but in this case it means *“because”*.

5. **NO**

This is not correct because the recipient may be a woman.

6. **YES**

Past tense is used to explain what happened.

7. **NO**

You should not start sentences with *“and”* in formal, written English. Use *“in addition”* or *“additionally”* instead.

8. **YES**

Do not directly ask the recipient questions. It sounds silly.

9. **YES**

10. **YES**

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You have just received a letter from an overseas university saying that your IELTS band score of 6 is too low for admission to any of its Master's Courses (you need 6.5)

Write a letter to the admissions officer. In your letter

- **Introduce yourself.**
- **Enquire about any alternative ways of gaining entrance.**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear...,

Model Answer A: IELTS Band 5+

Dear Wendy,

Hi, I just got a letter from you saying that I can't enter your university's Master of Marketing Management course in August because my English isn't good enough. You said my IELTS score of 6 was too low and that I would need at least 6.5. I know it's important for overseas candidates to have good English, but I really want to go to your university. Is there any way I could convince you to change your mind? Also, a friend of mine who is now studying at your university told me I might be able to do a two-month, pre-session course and then sit a different test (or take IELTS again) before the start of semester because that's what she did. So I wanted to ask for more information about any courses like this or any other way to get in to your Marketing programme. I've written my home and e-mail addresses as well as my phone number at the bottom of the page if you need them. Thank you for your help.

Regards,

Yung, Da Wei

(180 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS Band 7+

Dear Ms Barlowe,

I am writing with regard to your rejection of my application to begin postgraduate studies in Marketing Management at your university in August. You indicated that my IELTS band score of 6 was insufficient and that I would require a minimum of 6.5 to gain admission. While I recognize the importance of ensuring the English competency of enrolling overseas candidates and fully accept your decision, a friend of mine currently studying at your institution has suggested that it may be possible for me to take a two-month, pre-session English course and then either take an internal examination or resit IELTS prior to the beginning of semester as this is what she did. Hence, I was wondering if you could send me further information on any such courses on offer or any other possible means of gaining entrance to your master of Marketing Management programme. I have supplied my home and e-mail addresses along with my mobile phone number for your convenience. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Yung, Da Wei

(177 words)

Model Sentence Structure

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|---|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I am writing about your letter saying that I will not be able to enter your university's Master of Marketing Management course in August. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am writing with regard to your letter rejecting my application to start postgraduate studies in Marketing Management at your university in August. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I am writing with regard to your rejection of my application to begin postgraduate studies in Marketing Management at your university in August. |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 6 | You said that my IELTS score of 6 was too low and that I would need at least 6.5 to get in. |
| | IELTS 7+ | You indicated that my IELTS band score of 6 was insufficient and that I would require a minimum of 6.5 to gain admission. |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | I know it is important to make sure new overseas candidates have good English and I fully accept your decision. However, a friend of mine who is now studying at your university has told me that I might be able to take a two-month, pre-sessional course and then do a different test or take IELTS again before the start of semester because that's what she did. |
| | IELTS 6 | I recognize that it is important to ensure that new overseas candidates are competent in English and I fully accept your decision; however, a friend of mine who is currently studying at your institution has suggested that I may be able to take a two-month, pre-sessional English course and then take an internal test or resit IELTS again prior to the start of semester because this is what she did. |
| | IELTS 7+ | While I recognize the importance of ensuring the English competency of enrolling overseas candidates and fully accept your decision, a friend of mine currently studying at your institution has suggested that it may be possible for me to take a two-month, pre-sessional English course and then either take an internal examination or resit IELTS prior to the beginning of semester as this is what she did. |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | So I wanted to ask for more information about any courses like this or any other way to get in to your Marketing Programme. |
| | IELTS 6 | Therefore, I wonder if could you send me more information on any courses like this or any other means of getting in to your Master of Marketing Management programme. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Hence, I was wondering if you could send me information on any such courses on offer or any other possible means of gaining entrance to your Master of Marketing Management programme. |

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|--|
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 5 | I have written my home and e-mail addresses as well as my phone number at the bottom of the page if you need them. |
| | IELTS 6 | I have provided my home and e-mail addresses as well as my mobile phone number should you required them. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I have supplied my home and e-mail address along with my mobile phone number for your convenience. |
| Sentence 6 | IELTS 5 | Thank you very much for your help. |
| | IELTS 6 | I appreciate your assistance. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| Basic (informal) | Intermediate | Advanced (formal) |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Course (n.) | Programme (n.) |
| Say (v.) | | Indicate (v.) |
| Score (n.) | Band score | |
| Get in | Enter (v.) | Gain entrance/ Gain admission |
| Too low | Insufficient (adj.) | |
| Need (n./v.) | | Require (V.) |
| | At least | A minimum of |
| Know (v.) | | Recognize (V.) |
| Now (adv.) | | Currently (v.) |
| | University (n.) | Institution (n.) |
| | | Take IELTS/ Sit IELTS |
| Test (n.) | | Examination (n.) |
| Before (adv.) | | Prior to |
| Because (conj.) | | As (conj.) |
| So (adv./conj.) | | Hence (adv.) |

***Note:** Americans write “**program**”, whereas the British/Australian spelling of this word is “**programme**”. We all write “**program**” when we talk about “**computer programs**”*

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions by circling A,B or C

- Question 24 asks you to write:
 - A formal letter
 - An informal letter
 - A normal letter
- Which model answer is better?
 - Model Answer A
 - Model Answer B
 - Both equally good
- “**Ms**” is a title for:
 - A married woman
 - An unmarried woman
 - A married or unmarried woman
- When the writer uses “**currently**” (see Model Answer B), what verb tense does he use?
 - Past simple tense (studied)
 - Present perfect tense (has/have studied)
 - Present continuous tense (is/are studying)

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

- The writer invented the recipient’s name.
- “**Hi**” (see Model Answer A) is too informal for this situation.
- It is rude to directly ask someone to change their mind in this situation (see Model Answer A)
- It is rude to ask if there is any other way to enter the course (see both model answers)
- The phrase “**means of gaining entrance**” (see Model Answer B) is the same as “**way to get in**”.
- “**Yours sincerely**” is a good way to sign off if you know the other person’s name but have never met them.

CHECK YOUR ANSWER

1. **A**

2. **B**

Model Answer B is better because it is more formal

3. **C**

Many women like to use the title “**Ms**” nowadays because they feel that “**Miss**” and “**Mrs**” are sexist. “**Ms**” also sounds more professional.

4. **C**

The word “**currently**” usually goes with present continuous tense; however, it can sometimes be used with present simple.

5. **YES**

6. **YES**

You do not need to say hello in a formal letter.

7. **YES**

It is pushy and rude to ask someone to change their mind, especially when an official decision has been made. In some culture, it is acceptable to push someone to change their mind, but in English speaking countries it is not.

8. **NO**

It is not rude to ask for information about other ways to get in to university.

9. **YES**

These two phrase mean the same thing, but “**means of gaining entrance**” is better because it is more formal.

10. **YES**

You should write this if you know the recipient’s name but have never met him/her

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You have been accepted to study at an overseas university, but feel a little anxious about living and studying in an unfamiliar environment.

Write to the university's student union. In your letter

- *Introduce yourself*
- *Explain your interests*
- *Enquire about any relevant social clubs you might be able to join*

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear.....,

Model Answer A: IELTS Band 5+

To the student Union,

Hello. I'm an overseas student taking up studies at your university soon. I wanted to ask about any clubs or societies that I might be able to join next semester. I'm a little bit worried about going to a university I don't know in a different country, so I want to make some contacts before I get there. I guess what I really want to know is whether or not there are any clubs for Chinese students. If there are, could you send me some information about their membership fees and how to join, or just give me their phone numbers so I can call them myself? I'm interested in computers and technology, online gaming and basketball so it would be great if you could send me information about any clubs for people who are interested in these things. Thanks very much for your help.

Best wishes,

Johnson Zhang

(153 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS Band 7+

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am a newly enrolled overseas student soon to take up studies at your university. I am writing with regard to any clubs or societies likely to be open and operating at your university during the coming semester. I am rather nervous about attending an unfamiliar university in a foreign country and would, therefore, like to make some contacts before arriving. I am especially interested to know whether there are any clubs for Chinese students. If so, could you possibly send me some brochures containing information on membership and associated fees, or at least provide me with the contact details of any such clubs so that I can make my own independent enquiries? I would also be grateful for any information you could provide about clubs related to computers and technology, online gaming or basketball, as these are areas of particular interest to me. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Your faithfully,

Johnson Zang

(158 words)

MODEL SENTENCE STRUCTURES

| | | |
|------------|---------|--|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I'm an overseas student starting studies at your university soon. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am a newly enrolled overseas student taking up studies at your university soon. |
| | IELTS 7 | <i>I am a newly enrolled overseas student soon to take up studies at your university.</i> |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 5 | I wanted to ask about any clubs or societies that I might be able to join next semester. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am writing about any clubs or societies that may be open and running at your university next semester. |
| | IELTS 7 | <i>I am writing with regard to any clubs or societies likely to open and operating at your university</i> |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | I'm a little bit worried about going to a university I don't know in a different country, so I want to make some contacts before I get there. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am quite nervous about attending a university I am unfamiliar with in a foreign country. Therefore, I would like to make some contacts before I arrive. |
| | IELTS 7 | <i>I am rather nervous about attending an unfamiliar university in a foreign country and would, therefore, like to make some contacts before arriving</i> |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | What I really want to know is whether or not there are any clubs for Chinese students. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am particularly interested to know if there are any clubs for Chinese students. |
| | IELTS 7 | <i>I am especially interested to know whether there are any clubs for Chinese students.</i> |

| | | |
|------------|---------|---|
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 5 | If there are, could you send me some information about their membership fees and how to join, or just give me their phone numbers so I can call them myself |
| | IELTS 6 | If there are, could you possibly send me some brochures containing information about membership and associated fees, or just give me the phone numbers of any such clubs so that I can enquire independently |
| | IELTS 7 | <i>If so, could you possibly send me some brochures containing information on membership and associated fees, or at least provide me with the contact details of any such clubs so that I can make my own independent enquiries</i> |
| Sentence 6 | IELTS 5 | I'm interested in computers and technology, online gaming and basketball. So it would be great if you could send me information about any clubs for people who are interested in these things. |
| | IELTS 6 | I would also appreciate any information you could give me about clubs related to computers and technology, online gaming or basketball, because I am particularly interested in these areas |
| | IELTS 7 | <i>I would also be grateful for any information you could provide about clubs related to computers and technology, online gaming or basketball, as these are areas of particular interest to me</i> |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| <i>Basic Informal</i> | <i>Intermediate</i> | <i>Advanced Formal</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Ask (v) | | Enquire (v) |
| | A little bit | Rather (adv) |
| Worried (adj) | Nervous (adj) | |
| Go to | | Attend (v) |
| Different country | Foreign country | |
| Get there | Arrive (v) | |
| Give (v) | | Provide (v) |
| | (be) grateful | Appreciate (v) |
| Help (n/v) | | Assistance (n) |

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these question by circling A, B or C

- Question 25 asks you to write:
 - A formal letter to someone you have probably met
 - A formal letter to someone you have probably never met
 - An informal letter to an old friend
- The purpose of this letter is to:
 - Say how nervous you feel
 - Ask for information
 - Join a club
- Which of the following is a better way to start a question in a formal letter?

- A. Tell me....
 - B. I want to ask...
 - C. I wanted to ask.....
4. Which of the following is the best way to finish a formal letter to someone whose name you do not know?
- A. Best wishes
 - B. Regards
 - C. Your faithfully

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

- 5. The writer give some information about himself before asking the recipient for information
- 6. “**Hello**” (see Model Answer A) is a bad way to start a formal letter.
- 7. “**I guess**” (see Model Answer A) is too informal to use in this letter
- 8. The writer puts “**therefore**” (see Model Answer B) at the start of the sentence.
- 9. Too many sentences in Model Answer B start with “**I am**”

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

- 1. **B**
- 2. **B**

In this letter, you must ask for information about clubs and societies.

- 3. **C**

Past tense is often considered more formal than present tense. For instance, “**could you tell me**” is more formal than “**can you tell me**”.

- 4. **C**

The other two alternatives are too informal.

- 5. **YES**

This is polite

6. **YES**

You do not need to say “**hello**” or “**hi**” In a formal letter

7. **YES**

“**I guess**” is quite informal. Use it when speaking, but not in formal writing.

8. **NO**

In Model Answer B, “**therefore**” comes in the middle of the two-word verb “**would like**”, which becomes “**would, therefore, like**”.

9. **YES**

You should not start every sentence the same way. This is repetitive and boring and the examiner may think you do not know any other way to start a sentence.

Question 26

UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task

You are thinking of applying to do postgraduate studies at an overseas university or college.

Write to the admissions office. In your letter

- *Introduce yourself*
- *Request information about entry requirements, tuition fees and the availability of accommodation on campus*

Write at least 150 words

You do not need to write any addresses

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear.....,

Model Answer A: IELTS band 5+

To the Admissions Officer,

I just wanted to ask what academic, professional and English qualifications I would need to get into your MBA programme. At the moment, I've got a Bachelor of International Trade degree from a good Chinese university as well as three year's experience working in the field with a big company that sell computer parts. I haven't taken the IELTS test yet, but I got more than 600 in TOEFL last year. Is this good enough? I'd really appreciate any information you could give me about this. Also, could you send me some brochures about tuition fees and the availability and cost of student accommodation? I've sent copies of my academic transcript as well as work and academic references. If you need any more information about my background or study plans, you can get in touch with me at the address or phone number at the top of this page.

Regards,

Jack Peng

(157 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS Bang 7+

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in order to enquire about the academic, professional and/ or English language prerequisites for admission to your Master of Business Administration programme. I currently hold a Bachelor's degree in International Trade from a reputable Chinese university and have three years' relevant experience with a major distributor of computer components. I have not yet taken the IELTS test; however, I did attain a score of over 600 in TOEFL last year. I was wondering if this is likely to be sufficient? I would be most appreciative of any information you could give me in this regard. I also wonder if it would be possible for you to send brochures relating to tuition fees along with the availability and cost of on-campus accommodation. Please find enclosed copies of my academic transcript as well as both academic and work-related references. Should you have any further queries regarding my study plans or background, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address or phone number provided above.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Peng

(172 words)

MODEL SENTENCE STRUCTURES

| | | |
|------------|---------|---|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I wanted to ask about the study, work and/or English language requirements to enter your Master of Business Administration course |
| | IELTS 6 | I am writing to enquire about the academic, professional and/or English language requirements for entrance to your Master of Business Administration programme |
| | IELTS 7 | I am writing in order to enquire about the academic, professional and/or English language prerequisites for admission to your Master of Business Administration programme |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 5 | Is this good enough? |
| | IELTS 6 | I was wondering if this will be good enough? |
| | IELTS 7 | I was wondering if this is likely to be sufficient? |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | I would really appreciate any information you could give me about this |
| | IELTS 6 | I would most appreciate any information you could give me on this matter |
| | IELTS 7 | I would be most appreciative of any information you could give me in this regard |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | Could you please also send brochures about tuition fees as well as the availability and cost of accommodation at the university? |
| | IELTS 6 | I also wonder if you could send brochures on tuition fees along with the availability and cost of accommodation on campus |

| | | |
|------------|----------|--|
| | IELTS 7 | I also wonder if it would be possible for you to send brochures relating to tuition fees along with the availability and cost of on-campus accommodation |
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 5 | I have included copies of my academic transcript and also both work and academic references |
| | IELTS 6 | I have enclosed copies of my academic transcripts as well as both academic and work-related references |
| | IELTS 7+ | Please find enclosed copies of my academic transcript as well as both academic and work-related references |
| Sentence 6 | IELTS 5 | If your have more question about my study plans or background, you can contact me at the address or phone number at the top of the page. |
| | IELTS 6 | Should you have any further questions about my study plans or background, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address or phone number provided above |
| | IELTS 7+ | Should you have any further queries regarding my study plans or background, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address or phone number provided above |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| <i>Basic</i> | <i>Informal</i> | <i>Intermediate</i> | <i>Advanced</i> | <i>Formal</i> |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Ask (v) | | | Enquire (v) | |
| Have (v) Have got | | | Hold (v) | |
| Computer parts | | | Computer components | |
| But (adv/conj) | | However (adv/conj) | | |
| Get (v) | | | Attain (v) | |
| Enough (adj) | | | Sufficient (adj) | |
| About (prep) | | | Regarding (prep) Relating to | |
| And (conj) | | Along with/ As well as | | |
| Get in touch | | Contact (v) | | |
| At the top | | Above (prep) | | |

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these question by circling A, B or C

- Which is the best sentence to use in a formal letter (see both model Answers)?
 - I was wondering if this is likely to be sufficient?
 - Is this good enough?
 - I wonder if this is likely to be sufficient?
- The word “**should**” (see Model Answer B) means:
 - Must
 - A good idea
 - If
- Which of the following is only used in spoken English?
 - Have
 - Have got
 - Possess
- What verb tense does the writer use to talk about his TOEFL score (see both model answers)?
 - Past simple tense
 - Present simple tense
 - Future simple tense
- Which of the following sentences is grammatically wrong?
 - I have not yet taken the IELTS test
 - I have not taken the IELTS test yet
 - I have yet not taken the IELTS test

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

- The question asks you to write a formal letter

7. “**To the Admissions Officer**” (see Model Answer A) is a good way to start a formal letter
8. The phrase “**in order to**” (see Model Answer B) is used to explain why the writer is writing the letter
9. The writer says he has put his contact details at the bottom of the page.

CHECK YOUR ANSWER

1. A

Past tense is more formal than present tense and direct question are less formal

2. C

“**Should**” has two meanings. It sometimes means that something is a good idea, and in formal writing sometimes means “**if**”

3. B

“**Have got**” is especially common in Australian and British English and is quite informal. Use it in speaking, but not in writing.

4. A

The writer took the TOEFL test in the past, so he uses past simple tense

5. C

“**Yet**” can go at the end of the sentence or after “**not**”

6. YES

7. NO

You can write this on the outside of an envelope or package that you want to send, but not at the start of a letter.

8. YES

This is one of the most useful sentence structures in formal letter writing.

9. NO

The writer says he has put his contact details at the top of the page.

Question 27

MISSED IMMIGRATION INTERVIEW

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task

You missed an appointment for an immigration interview recently because of circumstances out of your control.

Write to the immigration office. In your letter

- *Introduce yourself*
- *Apologise for missing your appointment*
- *Explain what happened*
- *Request a new appointment*

Write at least 150 words

You do NOT need to write any addresses

Begin your letter as follows

Dear.....,

Model Answer A: IELTS band 5+

Dear Keith,

I just want to explain why I couldn't make it to my immigration interview last Friday and arrange a new appointment. I was actually on my way to your office when I got a call from my daughter's school. Her teacher said she was having a bad asthma attack. Because my wife wasn't free at the time, I had to go to the hospital with my daughter. I tried to call your office to cancel the appointment, but then my mobile ran out of batteries. When I got to the hospital, I was busy taking care of my daughter and talking to the doctor so I just forgot. I'm really sorry for the trouble this probably caused the interviewer and your other staff. Could you please make me a new appointment for me to have the interview within the next two weeks? I'm free before 12pm from Monday to Thursday and after 3pm on Friday. You can reach me at the address or phone number above. Thanks so much for your help.

Regards,

Vincent Lu

(176 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS 7+

Dear Mr Wood,

I am writing in order to explain my absence from the immigration interview I was scheduled to attend last Friday and request a new appointment. I was, in fact, on my way to the interview when I received a call from my daughter's school saying that she was suffering a severe asthma attack. As my wife was not available, it was necessary for me to accompany my daughter to the hospital. I then attempted to contact your office to cancel my appointment; however, my mobile phone ran out of batteries. Once at the hospital, I was busy comforting my daughter and talking to the doctor so I simply forgot. I sincerely apologise for the inconvenience I am sure I caused the interviewer and others at your office. I was wondering if it would be possible to arrange a new appointment for sometime during the next two weeks? I am available until 12pm from Monday to Thursday and after 3pm on Friday and can be contacted at the email address or phone number provided. I appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Your sincerely,

Vincent Lu

(187 words)

MODEL SENTENCE STRUCTURES

| | | |
|------------|----------|--|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I just wanted to explain why I couldn't make it to my immigration interview last Friday and ask for a new appointment |
| | IELTS 6 | I am writing to explain why I was absent from the immigration interview I was scheduled to attend last Friday and ask for a new appointment |
| | IELTS 7+ | <i>I am writing in order to explain why my absence from the immigration interview I was scheduled to attend last Friday and request a new appointment</i> |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 5 | Because my wife wasn't free at the time, I had to go to the hospital with my daughter |
| | IELTS 6 | As my wife was not free at the time, I needed to accompany my daughter to the hospital |
| | IELTS 7+ | <i>As my wife was not available, it was necessary for me to accompany my daughter to the hospital.</i> |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 6 | When I got to the hospital, I was busy taking care of my daughter and talking to the doctor so I just forgot. |
| | IELTS 7 | <i>Once at the hospital, I was busy comforting my daughter and talking to the doctor so I simply forgot.</i> |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | I'm really sorry for the trouble this probably caused the interviewer and your other staff. |
| | IELTS 6 | I sincerely apologise for the trouble I am sure I caused the interviewer and others at your office. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I sincerely apologise for the inconvenience I am sure I caused the interviewer and others at your office. |

| | | |
|------------|----------|--|
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 5 | Could you please make a new appointment for me to have the interview within the next two weeks? |
| | IELTS 6 | I was wondering if you could arrange a new appointment for sometime within the next two weeks? |
| | IELTS 7+ | <i>I was wondering if it would be possible to arrange a new appointment for sometime during the next two weeks?</i> |
| Sentence 6 | IELTS 5 | I'm free before 12pm from Monday to Thursday and after 3pm on Friday. You can reach me at the address or phone number above |
| | IELTS 6 | I am free before 12pm from Monday to Thursday and after 3pm on Friday. You can reach me at the e-mail address or phone number provided. |
| | IELTS 7+ | <i>I am available until 12pm from Monday to Thursday and after 3pm on Friday and can be contacted at the e-mail address or phone number provided.</i> |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| <i>Basic Informal</i> | <i>Intermediate</i> | <i>Advanced Formal</i> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Make it | | Attend (v) |
| Actually (adv) | In fact | |
| Get (v) | Receive (v) | |
| Have (an illness) | | Suffer (an illness) |
| Because (conj) | | As (conj) |
| | Free (adj) | Available (adj) |
| Go with | Accompany (v) | |
| Try (v) | | Attempt (n/v) |
| Call (n/v) | Contact (n/v) Reach (v) | |
| But (adv/conj) | However (adv/conj) | |
| Just (adv) | | Simply (adv) |
| Trouble (n/v) | Inconvenience (n/v) | |
| Before (prep.) | Until (prep) | |
| Help (n/v) | | Assistance (n) |

MODEL SENTENCE STRUCTURES

Answer these question by circling A, B or C

Question 1 refers to the following four simplified sentences taken from the model answers

- i. My daughter had a serious asthma attack and my wife was not available at the time
- ii. Could you arrange a new appointment for me sometime during the next two weeks?
- iii. I am writing in order to explain why I missed my immigration interview last Friday
- iv. Hence, I had to go to the hospital with my daughter.

1. Put the above sentence in the correct order

- A. iii./i./iv./ii.
- B. iv./ ii./ iii./ i.
- C. iii./i./ii./iv.

2. Question 27 asks you to:

- A. Apolpgrise for being late to an interview, explain what happened and request a new appointment.
- B. Say sorry for missing an interview, explain what happened and ask for a new appointment
- C. Explain why you missed your appointment

3. The writer says he missed his immigration interview because:

- A. His daughter was sick
- B. His wife was busy
- C. Both of the above

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

4. Question 27 asks you to write to a person called Keith Wood.
5. The writer uses present tense to talk about his daughter's asthma attack (see both model answers)

6. This is an informal letter
7. It is better to use a person's surname (family name) when you start a formal letter.
8. You can use the word "**suffer**" (see Model Answer B) to talk about any illness or injury
9. "**I'm sorry**" (see Model Answer A) is less formal than "**I sincerely apologise**" (see Model Answer B)
10. The word "**once**" (see Model Answer B) has two meanings: it sometimes means "**one time**" and sometimes means "**after**".

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

1. **A**

Sentences have a logical order. Your writing must be logical if you want the reader to understand you

2. **B**

3. **C**

The writer's daughter had an asthma attack and his wife was not available.

4. **NO**

But you can invent names

5. **NO**

The writer uses past tense.

6. **NO**

This is a formal letter

7. **YES**

If you know a person's surname, use it

8. **YES**

We often use the word "**suffer**" when we want to talk about a negative experience.

9. **YES**

"**I sincerely apologise**" is better in a formal letter.

10. **YES**

"**Once**" can mean "**one time**" or "**after**".

INFORMAL LETTER

Question 28

SAYING GOODBYE

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend 20 minutes on this task

You recently finished studying at a university in another country where you shared a house with a fellow student. Something urgent came up while your housemate was away on a short trip and you had to leave without saying goodbye.

Write to your housemate. In your letter

- *Apologise for leaving without saying goodbye*
- *Explain why you have to leave*

Write at least 150 words

You do not need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear.....,

Model Answer A: IELTS Band 5⁺ (too formal)

Dear Ms Carruthers,

I am writing with regard to my unexplained early departure, for which I must apologise. Unforeseen and pressing matters arose at home – my grandmother fell ill and was hospitalised. She has since fully recovered though. I trust you had a pleasant holiday and would like to hear more about it if you have time to write. I believe you have my e-mail address, so perhaps in addition you could forward some photographs. I placed some money on the refrigerator as a contribution towards last month's telephone and electricity bills. Please do not hesitate to contact me should this prove insufficient. If you are not otherwise occupied perhaps you could visit me during the winter break. You could make use of our vacant guest room. I would most enjoy showing you the sights of Beijing. Lastly, please allow me to express my gratitude to you for being such a wonderful housemate – your tolerance of my untidiness and frequent bad moods was greatly appreciated. It is my sincere hope that we can maintain contact in the future. Please keep my invitation for the winter holidays in mind.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Liang

(192 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS Band 7+

Dear Joanne,

Sorry I had to leave in such a hurry without saying goodbye. Something urgent came up at home – my grandmother got sick and had to be taken to hospital. Everything's fine now though. Anyway, I hope you had a nice holiday. Please write and tell me about it if you've got the time. You have my e-mail address, so maybe you could send some photos too. I also hope you found the money for the phone and electricity bills that I left on the fridge – let me know if it's not enough. Actually, I was thinking that if you're not doing anything else, maybe you could come and visit me during the winter break. You could stay in the guest room here – I'd really love to show you the sights of Beijing. Anyway, I just wanted to say how much I've enjoyed being your housemate. I know I can be a bit messy at times, not to mention cranky, so thanks for putting up with me. Well, I'd better be going now. Keep in touch and don't forget my invitation for the winter holidays.

Regards,

Rachel

(191 words)

MODEL SENTENCE STRUCTURES

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I am writing with regard to my unexplained early departure, for which I must apologise. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am writing to apologise for my unexplained early departure. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | Sorry I had to leave in such a hurry without saying goodbye. |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 5 | Unforeseen and pressing matters arose at home – my grandmother fell ill and was hospitalised. |
| | IELTS 6 | Something unforeseen and pressing came up at home – my grandmother fell ill and was taken to hospital. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | Something urgent came up at home – my grandmother got sick and had to be taken to hospital. |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | I trust you had a pleasant holiday and would like to hear more about it if you have time to write |
| | IELTS 6 | I trust you had a nice holiday and would like to hear about it if you have time to write. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | I hope you have a nice holiday. Please write and tell me about it if you've got the time. |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | I placed some money on the refrigerator as a contribution towards last month's telephone and electricity bills. Please do not hesitate to contact me should this prove insufficient. |
| | IELTS 6 | I also hope you found the money I placed on the refrigerator as a contribution towards last month's telephone and electricity bills – please do not hesitate to contact me if this is insufficient. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | I also hope you found the money for the phone and electricity bills that I left on the fridge – let me know if it's not enough. |
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 6 | If you are not otherwise occupied perhaps you could visit me during the winter break. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | If you're not doing anything else, maybe you could come and visit me during the winter break. |
| Sentence 6 | IELTS 5 | Lastly, please allow me to express my gratitude to you for being such a wonderful housemate – your tolerance of my untidiness and frequent bad moods was greatly appreciated. |
| | IELTS 6 | Lastly, I just wanted to express my thanks to you for being such a wonderful housemate. I really appreciated the fact that you were so tolerant, because I know I can be quite untidy at times, not to mention bad-tempered. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | Anyway, I just wanted to say how much I've enjoyed being your housemate. I know I can be a bit messy at times, not to mention cranky, so thanks for putting up with me. |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| Basic (informal) | Intermediate | Advanced (formal) |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Leave (v.) | | Depart (v.) |
| | | Urgent (adj.) Pressing (adj.) |
| Come up | | Arise (v.) |
| Get sick | | Fall ill |
| Nice (adj.) | | Pleasant (adj.) |
| Maybe (adv.) | | Perhaps (adv.) |
| Send (v.) | | Forward (v.) |
| Too (adv.) | In addition | |
| Photo (n.) | Photograph (n./v.) | |
| Fridge (n.) | Refrigerator (n.) | |
| Not enough | | Insufficient (adj.) |
| Break (n.) | Holiday (n.) | |
| Love (v.) | Enjoy (v.) | |
| Messy (adj.) | Untidy (adj.) | |
| | Put up with | Tolerate (v.) |
| | Keep in touch | Maintain contact |

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions by circling A, B or C

1. Question 28 asks you to write a letter to:
 - A. Someone you know well
 - B. Someone you have met but do not know well
 - C. A total stranger
2. So this letter should be written in:
 - A. Formal English
 - B. Informal English
 - C. British English
3. Which of the following sentences is too formal for this letter?
 - A. It is my sincere hope that we can maintain contact in the future.
 - B. Keep in touch.
 - C. Don't be a stranger.
4. The word "**anyway**" (see Model Answer B) is usually used in:
 - A. Formal English
 - B. Informal English
 - C. Both

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

5. You can use a person's first name in informal letters (see Model Answer B).
6. "**Actually**" (see Model Answer B) is a good word to use in this letter because it is informal.
7. You can use contractions like "**you've**" and "**it's**" (see Model Answer B) in this kind of informal letter.
8. "**Keep my invitation... in mind**" (see Model Answer A) means "**Don't forget my invitation**" (see Model Answer B).
9. The word "**untidiness**" (see Model Answer A) is the adjective for "**untidy**".
10. In this letter, it is best to sign off with "**Yours sincerely**" because you know the other person's name.

CHECK YOUR ANSWER

1. A
You probably know your housemate quite well.
2. B
This is a personal letter to someone you know well, so it is informal.
3. A
This is a very long and complicated way to say something simple. You only need to use this kind of English in formal letter writing.
4. B
“Anyway” is commonly used in speaking.
5. YES
“Dear Joanne” is the best way to start because this is a personal letter. Make up names if you need to.
6. YES
“Actually” is a great word to use in speaking and informal writing.
7. YES
You can use contradictions in speaking and informal writing.
8. YES
“Keep in mind” means **“don’t forget”**.
9. NO
“Untidiness” is a noun; **“untidy”** is an adjective.
10. NO
“Yours sincerely” is too formal here. **“Regards”** is better.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You are in hospital as a result of a recent accident. Your co-workers have visited you several times and have given you cards and flowers.

Write to your workmates. In your letter

- ***Tell them about your current condition***
- ***Thank them for their thoughts and support***

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear ...,

Model Answer A: IELTS Band 5⁺ (too formal)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in order to express my heartfelt appreciation for all the cards, flowers, phone calls and visits I have received since my accident. The concern you have all shown has been moving. I also wish to inform you that my condition has vastly improved, despite the agony that my daily physiotherapy exercises will cause me. The doctor seems confident that I will be able to return home in the very near future. Were I able to do so, I would check out immediately as I am finding the monotony of daytime television unbearable. Hospitals can be incredibly boring places, particularly when one is confined to bed with one's leg suspended in a sling. Although I frequently express my displeasure at how busy we constantly are with overtime and meetings, I now have a far greater appreciation for my job and am eagerly anticipating my return to work. I trust you are all in good health. Thank you once again for your care and consideration. I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Yours faithfully,
Ivan Tang

(183 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS Band 7⁺

Dear friends,

Thank you all so much for your cards, flowers, phone calls and visits since my accident. Your care and concern mean a lot to me. I'm feeling much better today, although the exercise I have to do are really painful. The doctor says I can probably go home in a few days' time. To tell the truth, I'd check out today if I could – I'm already sick to death of daytime TV. Hospitals can be such boring places, especially when your leg is hanging in a sling and you can't leave your bed. I know I always complain about how busy we are with overtime and meetings and everything, but now I realize how much I actually enjoy my job. I just want to get back on my feet and back to work as soon as I can. Anyway, I hope you are all well. Thanks again and I hope to see you all very soon.

Regards,
Ivan.

(160 words)

MODEL SENTENCE STRUCTURES

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | I am writing in order to express my heartfelt appreciation for all the cards, flowers, phone calls and visits I have received since my accident. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am writing to say thank-you for all the cards, flowers, phone calls and visits I have gotten since my accident. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Thank you all so much for your cards, flowers, phone calls and visits since my accident. |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 5 | I also wish to inform you that my condition has vastly improved, although my daily physiotherapy exercises still cause me a lot of pain. |
| | IELTS 6 | I also wanted to tell you that my condition has greatly improved, although my daily physiotherapy exercises still cause me a lot of pain. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I'm feeling much better today, although the exercises I have to do are really painful. |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | The doctor seems confident that I will be able to return home in the very near future. |
| | IELTS 6 | The doctor says he is confident that I will be able to go home soon. |
| | IELTS 7+ | The doctor says I can probably go home in a few days' time. |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | Were I able to do so, I would check out immediately as I am finding the monotony of daytime television unbearable. |
| | IELTS 6 | If I could, I would check out immediately as I'm finding daytime television incredibly boring. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I'd check out today if I could – I'm already sick to death of daytime TV. |
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 6 | Hospitals can be incredibly boring places, particularly when one is confined to bed with one's leg suspended in a sling. |
| | IELTS 7+ | Hospitals can be such boring places, especially when your leg is hanging in a sling and you can't leave your bed. |
| Sentence 6 | IELTS 5 | Although I frequently express my displeasure at how busy we constantly are with overtime and meetings, I now have a far greater appreciation for my job. |
| | IELTS 6 | Although I often complain about how busy we always are with overtime and meetings, I now have a much greater appreciation for my job. |
| | IELTS 7+ | I know I always complain about how busy we are with overtime and meetings and everything, but now I realize how much I actually enjoy my job. |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| Basic | Intermediate | Advanced |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| | Although (conj) | Despite (prep.) |
| | Pain (n.) | Agony (n.) |
| | Painful (adj.) | Agonising (adj.) |
| Can (aux. v.) | | (be) able to |
| Go home | Return home | |
| Actually (adv.) To tell the truth | | |
| TV (n.) | Television (n.) | |
| Boring (adj.) | | Monotonous (adj.) |
| Boredom | | Monotony (n.) |
| | | Especially (adv.) Particularly (adv.) |
| Hanging (adj.) | | Suspended (adj.) |
| *always (adv.) | | Constantly (adv.) Frequently (adv.) |
| Complain (v.) | | Express displeasure |
| Enjoy (v.) | | Appreciate (v.) |
| Enjoyment (n.) | | Appreciation (n.) |
| Look forward to | | Eagerly anticipate |
| Hope (v./n.) | | Trust (n./v.) |
| Soon (adv.) | | In the very near future |

*Note: sometimes the word “**always**” is used to mean “**frequently**” or “**often**”. This is called exaggeration or hyperbole. For example: “**My football team always wins!**”*

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions by circling A, B or C

1. Question 29 asks you to write:
 - a. A formal letter of thanks
 - b. An informal letter of thanks
 - c. An informal letter of apology
2. In Question 29 the recipients of the letter are your:
 - a. Colleagues
 - b. Classmates
 - c. Friends
3. The word "**such**" (see Model Answer B) is followed by:
 - a. A noun
 - b. An adjective
 - c. An adjective and then a noun
4. The writer starts and finishes this letter by saying:
 - a. Why he is writing
 - b. His name
 - c. Thank you

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

5. "**Dear friends**" (See Model Answer B) is a good way to start a letter to a group of people you know quite well.
6. "**I trust**" (See Model Answer A) is a more formal way to write "**I hope**" (see Model Answer B).
7. The writer uses "**would**" and "**could**" in the phrase "**I'd check out today if I could**" (see Model Answer B) because it is impossible.
8. The writer mainly uses past tense in these letters.
9. "**Get back on my feet**" (see Model Answer B) means "**walk again**".
10. "**Yours faithfully**" is too formal for this letter.

CHECK YOUR ANSWER

1. B

2. A

“**Colleague**” is the same as “**workmate**” or “**co-workers**”. Your colleagues may be your friends, but not necessarily.

3. C

You should know how to change the sentence, “Hospitals are such boring places” into “**Hospitals are so boring**”.

4. C

It is sometimes good to start and finish a letter by saying thank you.

5. YES

6. YES

“**Trust**” has two meanings. It sometimes means “**believe**” and sometimes means “**hope**”.

7. YES

“**Would**” and “**Could**” are often used to talk about impossible or imaginary actions.

8. NO

The writer uses present tense.

9. NO

“**get back on my feet**” means “**get well**” or “**recover**”.

10. YES

“**Yours faithfully**” is for formal letter writing.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

An old friend of yours is coming to visit your city. You had planned to meet him at the airport, but something has come up and you will not be able to make it there on time.

Write to your friend. In your letter

- ***Explain the situation***
- ***Offer to make alternate arrangements***

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear ...,

Model Answer A: IELTS Band 5⁺ (too formal)

Dear Mr. Mason,

This letter concerns your upcoming visit to Beijing. I trust that preparations are progressing without hindrance. Based on past experience, I presume that you have yet to begin packing. I am eagerly anticipating your visit and have already conducted all the preparations necessary for you to make use of my guest room. Unfortunately, though, it will no longer be possible for me to be present for your arrival at 11:45 as I had initially planned since I will be required to attend a meeting that morning. If you have no objection to waiting it may be possible for me to reach the airport by approximately 13:30. If such a delay would be unacceptable to you, however, I will make arrangement for my secretary to meet you at the airport and accompany you to my residence. Kindly provide instructions in this regard prior to your departure and, as always, do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided should you require any further assistance.

Yours faithfully,
Zhu, Chen Yi

(175 words)

Model Answer B: IELTS Band 7⁺

Dear Jason,

I hope you're well and preparations for your visit to Beijing are going smoothly. If I know you, you probably haven't even started packing yet. I'm really looking forward to seeing you again and have already prepared the guest room for you. I have some bad news though – I will not be able to meet you at the airport when you arrive at 11:45 as I had originally planned. Unfortunately, I have to go to a meeting on the morning you get there, but if you don't mind waiting I could probably make it by about 13:30. If that doesn't suit you, I could send my secretary to meet you instead. Anyway, please let me know which you prefer sometime before you leave. Well, I guess that's about all I needed to say. You've got my number, so give me a call if there's anything else you need to know. Take care of yourself, and I'll see you when you get here.

Kind regards,
Chen Yi

(168 words)

MODEL SENTENCE STRUCTURES

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Sentence 1 | IELTS 5 | This letter concerns your upcoming visit to Beijing. |
| | IELTS 6 | This letter is about your approaching visit to Beijing. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | I'm writing about your visit to Beijing. |
| Sentence 2 | IELTS 6 | I trust that you are well and that preparations are progressing without hindrance. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | I hope you're well and preparations for your visit to Beijing are going smoothly. |
| Sentence 3 | IELTS 5 | Based on past experience, I presume you have yet to begin packing. |
| | IELTS 6 | Based on past experience, I presume you have not begun packing yet. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | If I know you, you probably haven't even started packing yet. |
| Sentence 4 | IELTS 5 | I am eagerly anticipating your visit and have already conducted all the preparations necessary for you to make use of my guest room. |
| | IELTS 6 | I am really looking forward to your visit and have already made all the preparations necessary for you to use to guest room. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | I'm really looking forward to seeing you again and have already prepared the guest room for you. |
| Sentence 5 | IELTS 5 | Unfortunately, though, it will no longer be available for me to be present for your arrival at 11:45 as I had initially planned since I will be required to attend a meeting that morning. |
| | IELTS 6 | Unfortunately, though, I will not be able to be there at the airport for your arrival at 11:45 as I had originally planned because I have to attend a meeting that morning. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | I have some bad news though – I will not be able to meet you at the airport when you arrive at 11:45 as I had originally planned. Unfortunately, I have to go to a meeting on the morning you get here. |
| Sentence 6 | IELTS 5 | Kindly provide instructions in this regard prior to your departure. |
| | IELTS 6 | Kindly give me instructions in this regard before your departure. |
| | IELTS 7⁺ | Anyway, please let me know which you prefer sometime before you leave. |

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

| Basic | Intermediate | Advanced |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Hope (n./v.) | | Trust (n./v.) |
| | Smoothly (adv.) | Without hindrance |
| Look forward to | | Eagerly anticipate |
| | Prepare (v.) | Conduct preparations |
| | Originally (adv.) | Initially (adv.) |
| Have to | | (be) required to |
| Go to | | Attend (v.) |
| Don't mind | | Have no objection |
| Make it | | Reach (v.) |
| About (adv.) | | Approximately (adv.) |
| Please (adv.) | | Kindly (adv.) |
| Let me know | | Provide instructions |
| Before (prep.) | | Prior to |
| Leave | | Depart |
| Need | | Require (v.) |

TEST YOUR COMPREHENSION

Answer these questions by circling A, B or C

1. Question 30 asks you to write:
 - a. A formal letter explaining a change of plans
 - b. An informal letter of apology
 - c. An informal letter explaining a change of plans
2. In this letter, you should greet the recipient using his/her:
 - a. Nickname
 - b. Surname
 - c. First name
3. A '**hindrance**' (see Model Answer A) is something that:
 - a. Helps you
 - b. Stops you or slows you down
 - c. Makes you sick
4. "**Will not be able to**" (see Model Answer A) is the future tense of:
 - a. Would not
 - b. Must not
 - c. Can not

Answer these questions by writing YES or NO

5. Model Answer A is better than Model Answer B because it is longer.
6. You can use a dash (--) to join two sentences if the second sentence explains something about the first one (see Model Answer B).
7. "**Such a delay**" (see Model Answer A) means "**this kind of delay**".
8. "**Though**" (see Model Answer A) can mean "**however**".
9. "**Kind regards**" is a good way to sign off on an informal letter.

CHECK YOUR ANSWER

1. C
2. C
3. B
A "**hindrance**" is a "**barrier**" or "**obstacle**".
4. C

The past tense is **“could not”**; the present tense is **“cannot”**; and the future tense is **“will not be able to”**.

5. NO

Model Answer B is better even though it is shorter, because it uses the right level of English (the correct register).

6. YES

Punctuation is an important part of good writing. You should try not to always use the same punctuation – learn some different ways to punctuate a sentence.

7. YES

8. YES

“Though” can replace **“however”** in the middle of a sentence or at the end, but not at the beginning.

9. YES

You can use **“kind regards”** if you know the other person quite well, but you are not very close. You would probably not write it to your best friend.

A few final tips

How to approach IELTS

In order to succeed in IELTS writing, it is vital that you think about your own attitude very carefully, because attitude is something that prevents many candidates from getting the score that they need. However, if you think about IELTS the right way, you will be one of the candidates who learns quickly and gets a higher score. Remember...

1. Be realistic!

Learning a language is hard work. Anyone who thinks they can improve their English from “**Hello, my name is Jack!**” to postgraduate university level in one or two months is dreaming. There is no magic formula that can give you really good English overnight. Give yourself enough time to prepare.

2. Do not give up too easily!

You may be quite optimistic when you start preparing for IELTS, then feel disappointed and let down when you find out how difficult it really is. Do not quit! It is just a matter of time and effort. You can do it if you set your mind to it.

3. Do not be scared to make mistakes.

You may be scared to speak or write because you do not want people to laugh at you when you make mistakes. But in language learning mistakes are actually good because they are opportunities to improve. If you want to learn, you need to be brave and take risks. Speak up in class and do not be scared to start a conversation with an English speaker.

4. Ask the right questions

There is an old saying in English: if you ask a silly question, you get a silly answer. Many candidates ask their teacher silly questions that have no answer. If you ask “**How can I get a better score in IELTS?**” you will get a very vague answer that will not help you at all. But if you ask “**How can I write an introduction to an essay about a pie chart?**” the answer you get may be very useful indeed.

5. Use the same material several times.

It is good to review the same IELTS material more than once to make sure that you have really learnt it. Do not always look for new material when you have not learnt everything you can from the old material yet. Your score does not depend on how many IELTS books you read (or how many classes you go to). Quality is more important than quantity.

6. Do not just memorise lots of vocabulary.

Yes, vocabulary is important, but when you learn a word you should make sure you know it well. You must know how to spell it, you must know other forms of the word (e.g. **“high”** and **“height”**); and you must know whether the word is used in spoken English or in writing (e.g. “get” and “gain”). It will help you more if you learn a few words really well and then learn different sentences and language patterns that you can use them in. Look at this example:

Regular exercise offers tremendous health benefits.

Many candidates would look at this sentence and decide to learn to word **“tremendous”**. However, I think it is much more important for you to learn that **“offer benefits”** is a common phrase in English and that we often use **“tremendous”** together with **“benefits”**.

Improve Your Spelling

The list below contains words that Chinese IELTS candidates often spell wrongly. Make sure you can spell these words correctly first, then keep a record of any other spelling mistakes you make as you prepare for the exam and review it regularly so that you do not repeat the same ones again. The secret to improving your spelling is to make sure that every mistake you make is a new mistake. Obviously, you will need a teacher to help check your writing for spelling errors. DO NOT write practice essays on a computer using a spell checker! Use a pen and paper.

| Wrong! | Right! |
|---------------------|--|
| Affection | Affect (v.)/effect (n.) |
| althought | Although |
| arguement | Argument |
| Chiness | Chinese |
| Convience | Convenience |
| Convient | Convenient |
| Crimer | Criminal |
| destory | Destroy |
| Droped | Dropped (past tense of “drop”) |
| goverment | Government |
| Endangerous species | Endangered species |
| Eniverment | Environment |
| Flucturate | Fluctuate |
| Forign | Foreign |
| Graphy | Graph |
| Materil | Material |
| Morden | Modern |
| nagative | Negative |
| Unclear energy | Nuclear energy |
| Opion | Opinion |
| precentage | Percentage |
| perhapes | Perhaps |
| Propotion | Proportion |
| situation | Situation |
| Slove | Solve |
| Tranditional | Traditional |
| Undergroung | Underground |
| Unempolyed | Unemployed |
| Varity | Variety |
| Verdal axis | Vertical axis |
| Worldwild | Worldwide |