

IELTS General Training Writing Task 1 Band Descriptors

Master English Australia | Simplified study guide, not official descriptors | Bands 5–9

Band	TASK ACHIEVEMENT Did you complete the task?	COHERENCE AND COHESION Is your answer easy to follow?	LEXICAL RESOURCE Do you use enough words correctly?	GRAMMATICAL RANGE AND ACCURACY Can you use different sentences correctly?
9	• You fully complete the task. • Your reason for writing is completely clear. • You develop all the bullet points extremely well. • Your tone is completely suitable for the person you are writing to.	• Your answer is extremely easy to follow. • Your ideas are in the best order. • Your paragraphs work very well. • You connect ideas naturally.	• You use a very wide range of words naturally and correctly. • You choose words that express exactly what you mean. • Very rare small vocabulary or spelling mistakes may occur.	• You use many different sentence structures naturally and correctly. • Your grammar and punctuation are excellent. • Very rare small mistakes may occur.
8	• You complete the task very well. • Your reason for writing is clear. • You clearly develop all the bullet points. • Your tone is appropriate.	• Your answer is very easy to follow. • Your ideas are in a clear, logical order. • Your paragraphs work well. • You connect ideas very well, with only occasional problems.	• You use a wide range of words correctly and naturally. • You can use more specific or advanced words well. • Occasional mistakes in word choice, natural word combinations or spelling may occur.	• You use a wide range of sentence structures. • Most sentences have no grammar errors. • Only occasional grammar or punctuation mistakes occur.
7	• You cover all the task requirements. • Your reason for writing is clear. • You cover all the bullet points, although some could have more detail. • Your tone is consistently suitable for the reader.	• Your answer is easy to follow. • Your ideas are in a clear order. • Your paragraphs generally work well. • You use different linking words and words such as this, these, it and they to connect ideas.	• You have enough vocabulary to express your ideas clearly. • You can use some more specific or advanced words correctly. • You usually choose words that naturally go together. • A few word-choice or spelling mistakes may occur.	• You use different types of complex sentences. • Many sentences have no grammar errors. • A few mistakes occur, but your meaning remains clear.
6	• You address the task requirements. • Your reason for writing is generally clear. • You cover all the bullet points, but some may need more detail. • Your tone is generally suitable, although it may sometimes change.	• Your answer is generally easy to follow. • There is a clear overall order. • You use linking words, but sometimes they sound mechanical or are used incorrectly. • You may repeat words or ideas when the connection is unclear.	• You have enough vocabulary to communicate your meaning. • You try some more specific or advanced words, but not always correctly. • Some word-choice or spelling mistakes occur. • The reader can still understand your meaning.	• You use both simple and complex sentences. • Your complex sentences are less accurate than your simple sentences. • Grammar and punctuation mistakes occur. • These mistakes rarely stop the reader understanding you.
5	• You generally address the task, but one or more bullet points need more detail. • Your reason for writing may sometimes be unclear. • Your tone may sometimes be unsuitable for the reader. • Some details may be irrelevant, repetitive or inaccurate.	• Your answer has some organisation, but the order is not always clear. • Some ideas do not connect smoothly. • You may repeat or incorrectly use linking words. • You may repeat words or ideas too often.	• Your vocabulary is limited but enough for basic meaning. • You may repeat the same words because you cannot find alternatives. • Some words are used incorrectly. • Spelling or word-form mistakes can sometimes make your meaning difficult to understand.	• You use a limited range of sentence structures. • You try complex sentences, but they often contain mistakes. • Grammar and punctuation mistakes are frequent. • Some mistakes make your meaning difficult to understand.

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What do these words mean?

IELTS term	What it means for you
Purpose	Why you are writing the letter, for example to complain, request information, apologise or invite someone.
Bullet points	The three things the IELTS question tells you to include. You need to address all three.
Develop a bullet point	Say enough about it. Explain, give a reason, add a useful detail or give an example where appropriate.
Tone	How formal, neutral or friendly your language sounds. Your tone should suit the person you are writing to.
Formal / informal	Formal language is less conversational and suits someone you do not know well or an official situation. Informal language is relaxed and suits someone you know well; both can be polite.
Linking words	Words and phrases that connect ideas, such as and, but, because, so, however, for example, also and on the other hand.
Complex sentence	A sentence that joins a main idea to another clause, often using words such as because, although, if, when, which or who.
Word choice	Choosing the word that gives the meaning you want.
Words that naturally go together	Common word combinations. For example, we say make a decision, not do a decision.
Relevant	Directly connected to the question or task. Do not include information that does not help answer it.

Band 9: This does not mean perfect English. Very rare small mistakes can still happen. Below the lowest band shown: The purpose or bullet points may not be clear and language problems increasingly affect meaning.

An examiner assesses your complete performance across all four criteria. This guide cannot guarantee a score.

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