

CREDIT: SIMON CARRIE, BRITISH COUNCIL, TAIPEI



Welcome to IELTS, your ticket to study and work overseas!

In response to the growing popularity of IELTS the Taipei Times, in conjunction with the British Council, brings our readers an IELTS preparation page which will run every Saturday on p14 of the Taipei Times. Each week will focus on a different area of the test. IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is an upper-intermediate test of English communication. It can be used for university entry and emigration around the English-speaking world and beyond. It measures your ability to communicate across the four language skills — reading, writing, listening and speaking — through authentic challenging tasks. With over 700,000 people taking IELTS annually, it is one of the fastest growing English tests in the world, trusted and accepted by over 4,000 organisations and faculties worldwide, and is a great alternative to TOEFL.

Writing: Academic Task 1

Guidelines

- ▶ **Minimum 150 words**, you will lose marks if you are under this word count.
- ▶ The task is to **DESCRIBE** data or a process. Do not give opinions, a hypothesis or solutions.
- ▶ Your language should be **academic and formal** in style. Do not use abbreviations or contractions.
- ▶ You should allow **no more than 20 minutes** to complete the task.

It should be structured as follows:

- ▶ **A short introduction** (one or two sentences) which provides an overview of the data, ie, what the topic or area is and how the data is presented. Do not copy the title heading, you should use your own words.
- ▶ **The main body** which includes
 - **The most significant information** in the data or process, the main similarities and differences and the overall trends. You do not need to describe all the information presented.
 - **A few facts and figures** from the data to support your description. It is not necessary to refer to all the data.
- ▶ **A short conclusion** (one or two sentences) which summarises the main trends or most significant features.

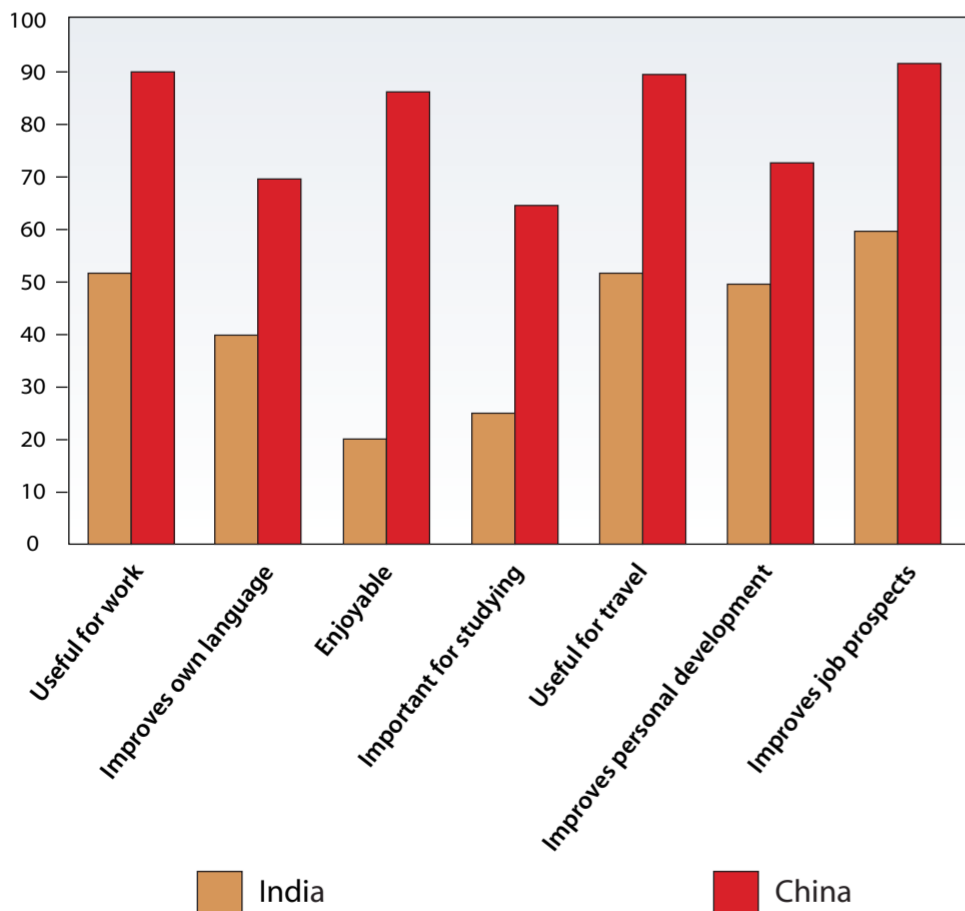
Looking for information at speed and summarising data

In the IELTS test there may be a lot of data to describe in a limited number of words. It is essential that you select the appropriate details and organise the material in a relevant way in order to fulfil the task requirements satisfactorily. In order to do this within the time limit you need to develop your speed in using language and finding information from mediums such as graphs, pie charts and bar charts.

Task 1

The bar chart below shows the results of a survey to find out why Chinese and Indian university students want to learn English at university. The survey had 10,000 participants.

Reasons for Learning English



The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We currently operate in 109 countries and territories and have over 70 years of experience. In Taiwan our aim is to build lasting relationships between the UK and Taiwan by connecting people with learning opportunities and creative ideas from the UK.

- We offer free, professional and impartial support for studying in the UK.
- We organise collaborative events and exchanges in education, arts, science, and English language teaching.
- We support learners and teachers of English in Taiwan.
- We provide English language courses.
- We offer access to UK examinations — including IELTS.

WRITING TASK 1

Examine the graph and answer the following questions as accurately as possible.

1. What does the bar chart show?
2. What information is given about the participants?
3. Which group was more positive about learning English?
4. What were the top reasons for learning amongst the more positive group?
What data supports this (percentages)?
5. What were the top reasons for learning amongst the less positive group?
What data supports this (percentages)?
6. What were the least popular reasons for learning amongst the less positive group?
What data supports this (percentages)?
7. What were the least popular reasons for learning amongst the more positive group?
What data supports this (percentages)?



PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

Answers

1. The bar chart shows the results of a survey.
2. 10,000 people were interviewed. The participants were Chinese and Indian university students.
3. Overall the Chinese students were more positive.
4. The most popular reasons amongst the Chinese students for learning English were that it is useful for work and could improve job prospects. In addition it was thought to be enjoyable and useful for travel. Around 90 percent of the students interviewed gave these reasons.
5. The most popular reasons amongst the Indian students for learning English were that it was useful for work and could improve job prospects. In addition it was thought to be useful for travel. Around 50 to 60 percent of the students interviewed gave these reasons.
6. The least popular reasons amongst the Indian students for learning English were that it is important for studying and enjoyable. These statistics were both around 20 to 30 percent.
7. The least popular reasons amongst the Chinese students for learning English were that it improves their own language, is important for studying and improves personal development. Around 70 percent of the students interviewed gave these reasons.

Now take the sentences for your answers and combine them to make one continuous text.

Example answer

The bar chart shows the results of a survey in which 10,000 Chinese and Indian universities were interviewed.

Overall the Chinese students were more positive with the most popular reasons for learning English being that it was useful for work and could improve job prospects. In addition it was thought to be enjoyable and useful for travel with around 90 percent of the students interviewed giving these reasons. Similarly, the most popular reasons amongst the Indian students for learning English were its usefulness for work and travel and its ability to improve job prospects, with slightly over half the participants giving these reasons. Interestingly, among the Indian students, enjoyment was not something that was thought to be an important factor for studying with around a fifth stating this reason. Conversely, over 80 percent of the Chinese students thought learning English was enjoyable. Around 70 percent said it is important for studying and improves their own language as well as their personal development.

In general the graph shows that Chinese students are more positive about learning English than Indian students.

Word count: 179

The bar chart below is provided for further practise:

Fertility Rate (Births per Woman) Southeast Asia 2000 and 2007

