



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 tips

In the writing section of the exam, you have one hour to write two pieces.

The first piece should be around 150 words long and in the academic paper, you have to describe statistical information, for example, from a graph, chart or table. If you are taking the general paper, you will need to write a letter, for example, complaining about bad service or asking about lost property.

The second piece should be around 250 words long. In both papers you have to write an essay either arguing a case or giving a solution to a particular problem.

There are a number of things you can do to improve your performance in the writing section of the exam:

1. Remember what criteria you are being marked on. Match the criteria on the left, with the explanations on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| (a) Task achievement | 1. Did you use synonyms, rather than repeating vocabulary? |
| (b) Coherence and cohesion | 2. Did you use a number of different structures — both simple and complex? |
| (c) Lexical resource | 3. Did you answer the question asked, or did you go off topic? |
| (d) Grammatical range and accuracy | 4. Did you use paragraphs, linking words and referencing? |

2. Analyse the essay question using SPRI (subject / parts / restrictions / instructions). Look at the example Part Two title and write down the SPRI below.

Question: Many people believe that governments interfere too much in our daily life. Discuss.

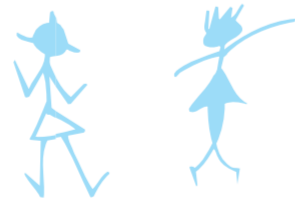
You should write at least 250 Words

Subject: _____

How many parts: _____

Restrictions: _____

Instructions: _____

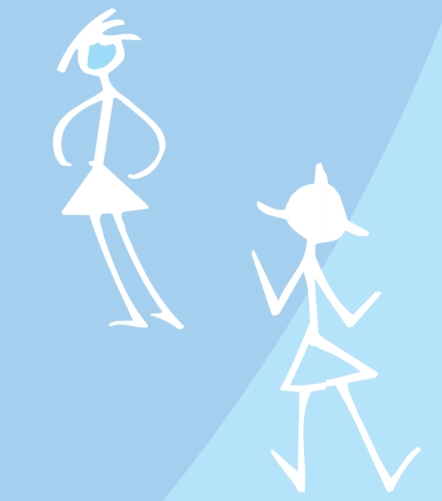


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- We offer free, professional and impartial support for studying in the UK.
- We organise collaborative events and exchanges in education, arts, science, and English language teaching.
- We support learners and teachers of English in Taiwan.
- We provide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



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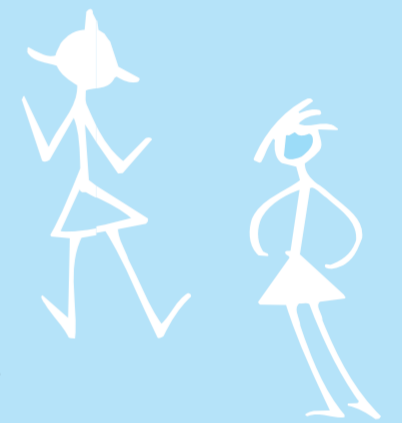
Thai students supporting anti-government demonstrators walk around the Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, on Sept. 10, 2008. PHOTO: EPA

3. Take three to five minutes before you write each answer to plan your essay. The easiest way to do this is to brainstorm, using a list, a mind-map or fast-writing.

On your own paper, take five minutes to “fast-write” the answer to the example question in number two.

The rules of fast writing are:

- » You write as much as you can on the topic.
- » You do not exceed the time allowed.
- » If you can't think of the English, write the Chinese.
- » If you have no ideas, just write rubbish until you get an idea.
- » No time for corrections.



Once you have practiced the technique, you should be able to produce at least one side of A4 in five minutes.

4. Take one to two minutes to organize the information in your answer to number three using EGO.

Here, you must:

- E** — eliminate any ideas that are not very good, repeat or don't fit into your essay.
- G** — group ideas that go together.
- O** — organize the grouped ideas into paragraphs.

5. Now write your full answer to the question in number three, using your organized notes. You should not spend more than 30 minutes doing this. Remember to include as many personal examples as you can (at least one per paragraph).

6. Take three to five minutes to check your answer for the areas below:

- » Tenses: Is everything that took place in the past referred to using the past tense? Are general truths written using the present simple?
- » Agreement: Do your subjects and verbs agree (For example: “I likes” does not agree, but “I like” does).

Paragraphs / linking words / examples: Did you write in paragraphs, include linking words and give examples? It's worth leaving a two-line space between each paragraph to add anything you might have forgotten.

Answer key:
a. 3 b. 4 c. 1 d. 2
Subject: Governmental interference
Parts: One
Restrictions: 250 words
Instructions: Discuss