

THE

GENERAL WRITING TASK 1

STUDY GUIDE



Everything You Need To Achieve **Band 7+** In The
GENERAL TASK 1 Writing Section Of The
IELTS



IELTS Excellence

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Credit to all IELTS examiners and tutors, past & present, who helped with the content of this book.

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Contents

Foreword	6
Introduction	8
Writing Task 1 - Background Information & FAQs	9
The 7 Major Letter-Writing Pitfalls	14
Top 10 Letter-Writing Tips	18
How Is My Letter Marked?	19
Common Letter Questions	21
What am I likely to get asked to do in a letter question?	21
How To Analyse Any Task 1 Question	24
The analysis strategy: 3 essential steps	25
IELTS Excellence Letter-Writing Frameworks	30
Personal letter framework & example	32
Formal letter framework & example	37
IELTS Excellence Task 1 Planning Strategy	44
Why is a plan important?	44
4 steps for making the perfect letter plan	47
Plan breakdown & model answer	51
Planning challenge - put your knowledge to the test	54
Band Score Booster	56
The 'House With 4 Windows' technique to boost your band score	60

Identifying The Correct Tone For Your Answer	64
Personal vs Formal Letter Comparisons	65
Understand the crucial differences between the 2 letter types	65
Personal vs Formal Letter: Bonus Phrases	69
The Correct Use Of Contractions In A Band 7+ Letter	70
The Correct Use Of Idioms In A Band 7+ Letter	72
The IELTS Excellence Idiom Bank	73
IELTS Excellence Band 7+ Letter Synonym Bank	76
Personal letter synonyms	76
Formal letter synonyms	82
The 3 Synonym Secrets Every Student Should Know	87
Using Complex Structures In The Writing Section	91
The 2 complex sentence clauses you MUST know	92
Alternative ways to make a complex sentences	93
The NUMBER 1 Complex Structure Pitfall	96
The 9 Band 7+ Noun-Verb Agreement Rules	97
How are nouns & verbs used in the IELTS?	97
How to use the noun-verb agreement rules to score Band 7+	99
IELTS Excellence TASK 1 'Damage Limitation' Strategy	108
How to use this strategy to score Band 7+ overall	109
The 8 step strategy	112

4 Key Mindset Techniques To Ensure IELTS Success	117
Developing A Winning Mindset	122
The 'Law of Attraction' and why it matters to you	122
The 'Positive Mindset' Feedback Loop	123
Practice Questions & Model Answers	124
The Power Of Using Practice Questions	128
Final Word	130

Foreword

Dear student,

Congratulations on your purchase of this IELTS General Writing Task 1 Study Guide. It contains everything you need to score at least band 7 in the IELTS letter-writing task. Writing a letter in the IELTS is not as easy as writing an everyday letter. There are certain criteria you must meet to impress the examiner, including a certain framework, the use of specific vocabulary and much more.

We will cover everything you need to know, including strategies, techniques, synonyms and vocabulary, but you must also practice and remain focussed yourself. You will be given all the tools you need, but you must use those tools effectively. We promise that if you do everything we advise and use the information in this book effectively, you will perform well in this task.

A little bit about us...

Here at IELTS Excellence, we know how it feels to have all the worry and stress when taking exams and achieving our dreams. We have personally spent more than 11 years in higher education at prestigious universities and have been through the whole process of migrating overseas and thriving in another country.

Our time at different UK universities along with the knowledge we gained from the process of sitting exams and moving abroad has been priceless. We want to pass as much of this advice on to you to help you pass the IELTS and live your dream life, whatever that may be.

What makes us different?

Just like many of you who plan to move abroad, study at distinguished universities, or advance your careers, we have been in the same situation as you and have felt the same emotions which you will be feeling now. We understand the stress and recognise your worries; we have felt them ourselves. It's human nature.

Most of the IELTS tutors you find on the internet are simply teachers. Some of whom are very respectable, and we thank them for helping students prepare for

the IELTS. However, most have never been through the process you are going through. They have not felt what it is like as somebody who **MUST** pass an English exam to reach their goal. They do not know how you **FEEL**. Having someone who really understands how you feel is exceptionally powerful and can give you extra motivation to succeed. That is where we can help.

The sole reason IELTS Excellence has been set up is to help **YOU**. You may already follow us on Instagram ([@ieltsexcellence](https://www.instagram.com/ieltsexcellence)) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/ieltsexcellence), and we can't thank you enough for your support - it means a lot to us.

Who do we work with?

We work alongside real IELTS examiners, tutors and content providers (past and present), to give you exceptional quality and reliable advice. We strive to help you achieve band 7, 8 or 9 in the IELTS, so you can go on to pursue your goals. It's that simple - we want you to succeed.

Additionally, our resources allow you to learn at your own pace. You can use any of the information we provide 24/7, whenever you want. You will never feel pressured to 'keep up' with other students. We all learn at different speeds and we all need to revisit information from time to time. Many online courses cost \$1000s and require your attention at specific times, otherwise you miss out. We don't believe this is fair, so we prefer to give you information you can use when you want :-).

Anyway, enough about us...

This book is about you and your dreams. As you read through, there may be parts which are confusing. Don't worry, if you have any questions, you can reach out to us at any time via email.

So, find somewhere quiet without any distractions, get a good old cup of English tea, and let's get started.

All the best,

Sam, Sarah & the IELTS Excellence team

Introduction

Let me ask you this: *'Do you want to be successful?'*

Silly question - of course you do.

A better question would be: *'**HOW MUCH** do you want to be successful?'*

After taking the IELTS, most students wish they had studied harder and achieved a better band score. However, one of the problems they have is that they don't want to be successful **ENOUGH**.

If you ask anyone *'Do you want to be successful?'* of course the answer will be 'Yes'. But the problem is, only a small percentage actually have a **real, strong desire** to succeed. And without this desire, achieving a high band score is difficult because the preparation and revision involved is laborious.

So our first piece of advice is **'Develop your desire to succeed.'**

It is helpful to visualise your dream life after the IELTS. Picture it in detail. What do you want? To work in Canada? Which area of Canada? What does the city look like? What sounds would you hear on the way to work? What coffee do you order from the local cafe? Imagine the taste. Imagine the feel of the cup in your hand.

This is visualisation, and it's one of the best ways to stimulate a strong desire.

Obviously, you will have your own 'dream life', you may not want to work in Canada, but whatever it is that you're chasing, visualise it in detail.

We advise you do this every day. Even consider printing off photos and putting them into a 'Visualisation Book', which you can look at daily.

Once you have the desire, you will find a way to reach this goal. This eBook will assist you in one step of this journey by helping you to be successful in General Writing Task 1.

Let's continue... Good luck.

Writing Task 1 - Background Information

What are the different question types of the general writing task 1?

The general IELTS writing section requires you to write a letter. This will either be in a formal style (for example to a manager) or personal style (for example to a friend). You will not be told whether to write in a formal or personal style; it is up to you to figure this out. You will be given certain details of what to include in the letter. We will discuss how to do this in this book.

How much of the overall writing score is task 1 worth?

Task 1 is worth one third of the overall writing score, whereas task 2 is worth two thirds of the total.

How long do I get to answer task 1?

We recommend completing task 1 in 20 minutes.

What if I spend longer than 20 minutes to write my task 1 answer?

You are responsible for keeping an eye on the clock and not running over. In total, you will get 60 minutes for the writing section (task 1 and task 2).

20 minutes should be spent on task 1 and 40 minutes on task 2. The clock will not stop between tasks, so technically you can spend longer than 20 minutes on task 1, but you will start eating into your allocated task 2 time.

How about if I do not write over 150 words?

You will lose marks and not score above band 5. One of the task requirements is to 'Write at least 150 words' so if you don't, the examiner will penalise you. The examiner will actually count each word to check!

Can I make notes on the exam paper?

You should only make notes on the QUESTION sheet, not your ANSWER sheet. The answer sheet is where you write your answer, and this is the one the examiner will see. The examiner will not see the question paper, so you can write anything on this.

Can I write in capital letters?

We advise only writing capital letters where necessary, for example a name, place or at the start of a sentence.

Can I use bullet points in my answer?

It is best to stay away from using bullet points. Just write a sentence containing the information.

Should I try and memorise letters before the exam?

No. We advise against memorising specific details, because you will be given a completely unique letter question in the exam, it is impossible to memorise the answer beforehand. You should be aware of the structure of answering a letter question, though (for example opening and closing a letter).

If I can't think of anything to write, should I just repeat the question?

No. If you are unsure what to write, go back to the question instructions. Try not to write about irrelevant things. Remember, 150 words is all you need – this is not many words in reality.

How is the general writing task 1 marked?

There are 4 band descriptors which the examiner uses to score your answer. Each of them makes up 25% of the score. These include 'Task achievement', 'Coherence & cohesion', 'Lexical resource' and 'Grammatical range and accuracy'.

You can find the official band descriptors here: <https://ielts-excellence.com/writing-band-descriptors/>

Is it true that I need to write in a specific style depending who I am writing the letter to?

Yes, this is correct. You need to adapt your tone and style of writing accordingly. For example, if you are asked to write a letter to a friend, you should be less 'formal' in your language. Just like you would talk to a friend.

Am I allowed to use contractions in my answer?

Contractions (for example 'they're') can only be used in a 'personal' letter. This is either to a friend or relative. You should not use contractions in any other parts of the writing section.

Is it true that I have to use my imagination for certain details in my letter?

Yes. You may have to add some extra details to your answer, depending on the details of the question. For example, if you get a question which asks you to write to a friend (but does not give you their name), you should make up a pretend name for them. If you are asked to recommend a restaurant to your Aunt, it may be a good idea to make up the name of the restaurant. The examiner likes to see that you understand the task and can adapt your writing accordingly.

What is the best way to learn to pass task 1?

You have made a great start by purchasing this book. We give you all the advice you need, however it is up to you to use this information effectively. You need to practice what you learn over and over again. Writing answers to example questions is a great way to improve and get a feel for things. Consider investing in our general practice question & model answer book like many successful students do. This contains both task 1 and task 2 example questions and model answers and has been written alongside real IELTS examiners.

I don't want to spend more money on IELTS preparation, I just want to pass!

There is so much information available online for free. However, you have to remember that many of the IELTS 'gurus' are not native speakers and the information they give is simply wrong. Whilst not all 'free' advice is incorrect, much of it is and you need to be VERY wary of these people. If you spend weeks of hard work following INCORRECT advice, you will fail miserably. We often speak to students who have taken the test over 10 times because they did not invest in their education.

If you are serious about achieving a great band score in the IELTS, you need to invest in your training. Some companies offer courses which cost over \$1000USD, which is too expensive for most. However, here at IELTS Excellence we work with real native IELTS examiners, test writers and tutors so you are guaranteed reliable band 7+ information. We keep the costs of our books as low as possible, but as you can imagine, good quality information from real IELTS examiners comes at a cost.

Can I use idioms in task 1?

You can only use idioms in a PERSONAL letter in the GENERAL test. They should not be used in a formal letter!

What happens if I do not get the required band score?

Essentially, if you fail to achieve your required band score, you would either have to resit the IELTS or give up altogether.

Why do students fail the IELTS?

The majority of students who fail do not prepare adequately. They do not invest in good quality resources and just expect they will pass without any help. This is an expensive mistake as the IELTS exam can cost up to USD \$240. Many students have to resit multiple times, which costs \$1000s in many cases.

If you invest time and money into good quality resources, like sensible students do, the likelihood of you failing is much lower. This means it is actually cheaper in the long run, you are able to stand out from the crowd and achieve your dream as soon as possible!



Tip!

Make sure you are familiar with the test format before you take the IELTS

The 7 Major Letter-Writing Pitfalls

It's important to understand the reasons why students commonly fail the letter-writing section, because it helps prevent you from making the same mistakes. Let's look at the most common problems and how you can avoid them...

1. Letters are written in the wrong 'tone'

There are two different letter types in the general version of task 1; personal and formal.

It is important to differentiate between the two, so you know how your letter should sound.

For example, students often mistakenly write a formal letter to a friend, or a personal letter to a manager. This shows the examiner that you do not fully comprehend how to write in English and you will lose marks because of this.

Later in this book we will discuss how you decide whether to write in a formal or personal style, along with examples of what the two letter styles look like.

TASK 1 LETTER TYPES:

1PERSONAL

2FORMAL

2. The letter is written without a plan

Just like task 2, students who fail to write a plan, fail to achieve a good score.

Planning your answer is **vital** to achieve a band 7+ score. A good plan shouldn't take longer than a few minutes, but if it is done correctly, it will save you a **significant** amount of time.

Writing a plan for your letter is really simple, when you know how to do it properly. It acts as a template for your answer - something you can quickly cast your eye on and know you are answering the question properly.

We will cover planning a letter later in this book so you become competent at writing task 1 plans!

3. The letter is 'opened' incorrectly

This follows on from pitfall 1. We recommend opening your letter by addressing the recipient along with stating the aim of your letter.

Who are you writing it to and what are you wanting to tell them?

This has a massive bearing on the 'tone' of the letter - a personal style letter will have a completely different opening compared with a formal type. You must learn the difference.

For example, you wouldn't want to start a letter to your friend the same way you would if you were writing to the manager of a supermarket.

Further in this book we will show you the best strategies to open a letter which are guaranteed to show the examiner you know how to complete the task.

4. The letter is 'signed off' incorrectly

Another important part of the letter-writing question is being able to correctly 'sign off' the letter. There are many different ways to do this, but you must use the correct technique.

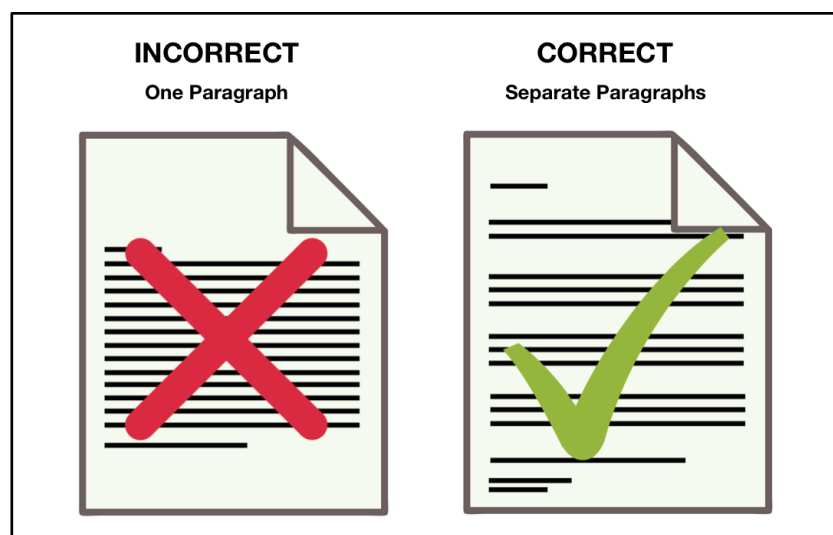
'Yours sincerely' is used in a completely different context to 'Best wishes' or 'Yours faithfully', and if you write the wrong one in your answer, you will be scored poorly by the examiner.

Additionally, you should include a name when you sign off, otherwise you are not fulfilling the requirements of the task. This can be your own name, or a pretend one.

5. The letter is written as one big paragraph

One of the things the examiner is looking for is your ability to structure your writing in a logical and readable fashion.

Students who write one big paragraph in their letter question lose marks. For this reason, you need to write separate paragraphs. The content of which depends on the specific question you get asked and whether it is a formal or personal style letter. We will cover letter structure in detail later in this book. Just make sure you practice writing in paragraphs!



6. Not all parts of the question are answered

A task 1 letter question will follow a specific format. You will be given a scenario followed by some instructions (usually 3). The instructions tell you what you **MUST** include in the letter.

It is all too common to see students writing a letter which does not include any of the information from the instructions.

If you don't answer the question, you will receive a very poor score.

Remember, you will only have 20 minutes to answer this question and you should write between 150-165 words (make sure it is at least 150 words). This is a small word count, so you must make sure everything that you **DO** write is actually **FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS**. You do not want to fill your answer with 'waffle'.

7. The letter is written with a lack of imagination

It is extremely important that you use a little bit of imagination in your letter.

You will be given a hypothetical situation, which you have to write about. For example, this could be writing to a friend to tell them about an amazing new restaurant you have been to. You won't be given **ALL** the information in the question. The examiner wants to see that you can think on your feet and adapt your writing skills to any situation.

This means that you may have to make up names, places, times and dates in your answer. Using the restaurant example above, you may have to give your 'friend' a name, such as 'David'. You may also decide to name the restaurant; something like 'Pizza Palace'. Additionally, it may be sensible to think about adding details like when you went there, who you went with and what you ordered.

A key component of a letter question is the ability to use your imagination and add details to the context of the question. Students who don't do this, will lose marks. We will cover this in more detail later in the book.

Top 10 Letter-Writing Tips:

Everyone loves 'Top Tips' - they go really well with understanding the pitfalls of a section. Simply put, if you follow the top 10 tips, you will achieve a much higher score than if you don't.

Here are the things you simply **MUST DO** to give yourself the best chance of success in the writing section:

1. Practice identifying the difference between a **formal** and **personal** letter
2. Always use **synonyms** in your answer
3. Learn some **useful phrases** that can be applied to most letters
4. Ensure you address all **3 points** in the question
5. **Plan** your answer successfully
6. Make sure you **structure** your letter correctly, including opening and closing statements
7. Use a **broad range** of vocabulary - don't repeat the same words
8. Spend no longer than **20 minutes** on task 1
9. Write at least **150 words**, and ideally less than 165
10. Use our proven band 7+ **frameworks** in the exam

**Tip!**

Utilise every one of these tips in the exam for maximum impact!

How Is My Letter Marked?

When the examiner marks your letter, they look for **very specific** content. There is no guesswork or bias from the examiners. The specific marking criteria used are known as band descriptors and you need to familiarise yourself with them before you sit the exam.

You can find the official TASK 1 writing band descriptors here: <https://ielts-excellence.com/writing-band-descriptors/> but we have also simplified them for you below:

Band descriptors (simplified):

1. Task Achievement

Answer the question! Do not write about anything which is not asked in the question! Make the purpose of each paragraph obvious to the examiner. Write in the correct 'tone' throughout.

2. Coherence and Cohesion

Your answer must be clear and fluent. It must flow well and be easily read aloud without any uncertainties about what you are trying to say. The occasional use of complex sentences along with good use of vocabulary and grammar will give you a band 7+ score in this section.

3. Lexical Resource

The appropriate use of vocabulary is key here. Do not use complex language that you do not understand. However, you need to use a broad range of words to score well, but this must be in the correct context. Do not copy words from the question.

4. Grammatical Range and Accuracy

The correct use of grammar, sentence structure and punctuation are vital to score well in this section. You must demonstrate a wide range of grammar but without making your sentences incorrect or confusing. Grammatical errors in more than half of your answer will score you below band 7.



Remember!

Band descriptors are used by the examiner to mark your answers. Make sure you are familiar with them, because this is everything your answers should be based around!

Common Letter Questions

As discussed above, you will be asked to write a letter regarding a given scenario. You should spend 20 minutes on this task, and it will make up 1/3 of your total mark for the Writing section. You must write 150 words and you will be assessed in four areas as per the band descriptors:

Task Achievement (25%)

Coherence and Cohesion (25%)

Lexical Resource (25%)

Grammatical Range and Accuracy (25%)

You will be given a scenario along with 3 bullet points detailing what you need to include in your letter. It is very important that you address all 3 bullet points and practice writing in the allotted time given as you will be marked down if you do not discuss any of the points.

You could be asked to write a letter about several different scenarios, but some of the most common include:

- 1. Asking for advice or help**
- 2. Complaining about something or someone**
- 3. Applying for a job or position**
- 4. Resigning from your current job or position**
- 5. Making a request for something**
- 6. Apologising for something**
- 7. Inviting someone to an event**
- 8. Thanking someone or expressing your appreciation**

Let's have a closer look at what you may be expected to do in each type of letter (remember, you will only get ONE letter in task 1).

Formal Letters - common requests

Requesting a reference

- For employment
- For renting a property
- For applying for university

Letter of complaint

- To a company (such as a shop or restaurant)
- To the local council

Letter of application

- For a job
- For a house rental
- For a university scholarship

Letter of request

- Taking extended leave from work
- Asking for a pay increase
- Wanting an appointment (eg. with a doctor)

Letter of resignation

- Leaving your current job

Letter of acceptance

- Accepting a job offer
- Accepting a place at university

Personal Letters - common requests

Letter of invitation

- Inviting a friend/relative to an event

Letter of advice

- Giving a friend/relative advice (eg. about a holiday)

Letter of apology

Apologising to a friend/relative

Letter of appreciation

Thanking a friend/relative

Letter of praise

Congratulating a friend/relative on something

Letter of requesting help

Asking a friend/relative for help

Letter of arrangement

Arranging something with a friend/relative (eg. planning a trip)

You must be aware, this is a limited list of scenarios which often come up in task 1. However, you may be asked to write a letter about something completely different.

Regardless of the question you get asked though, there will always be 3 separate bullet points with information which you will be asked to include in the letter. We will cover this later in the eBook.

How To Analyse Any Task 1 Question

One of the main tasks is being able to answer all parts of the question properly. This means you have to first understand what the question is actually asking you.

How do you do this? You have to analyse it properly.

Here we'll show you how to do this using the following question as an example...

Example Task 1 Question:

Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- **say why your university is a good choice**
- **describe the facilities the university has**
- **tell him about the university accommodation you live in.**

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to include any addresses in your answer.

So how would you go about analysing this?

At first glance, this question may seem quite easy. But you have to remember, you are trying to meet certain IELTS criteria.

Writing a normal everyday letter in real life is much different to how you are expected to do it in the IELTS.

So let's look at the strategy involved in analysing this type of question...

Analysis Strategy: 3 Essential Steps

Step 1: Understand what the letter is about

Obviously, the first thing you should analyse is the context of the letter. What is it about?

You will be given a scenario - some background information - for which you have to imagine you're part of. The context given may be detailed or brief, but you will always need to understand what it's about.

In our example, the context is relatively brief. Nevertheless, it will always be the first thing you read and it is important to differentiate this from the rest of the task.

Here's our example:

The context of the letter



Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- **say why your university is a good choice**
- **describe the facilities the university has**
- **tell him about the university accommodation you live in.**

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to include any addresses in your answer.

Step 2: Identify the tone

The second step in question analysis is deciding on the tone of the letter (the style you must write it in).

How do you decide?

Here's the golden rule in identifying whether you should write in a personal or formal style...

If you are asked to write the letter to a FRIEND or RELATIVE, the tone should be PERSONAL.

If you are asked to write to ANYBODY ELSE, the tone should be FORMAL.

So the key way to decide on the tone is by looking who the letter has to be written to and the question will actually tell you!

Friend = Personal Tone

Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- say why your university is a good choice
- describe the facilities the university has
- tell him about the university accommodation you live in.

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to include any addresses in your answer.

Step 3: Identify the requirements of the task & decide the key points to base your letter upon

The requirements (instructions) of the task are the things you **MUST** do in order to answer the question fully. If you do not meet all requirements of the task, you will receive a low band score.

There are 2 different sets of requirements:

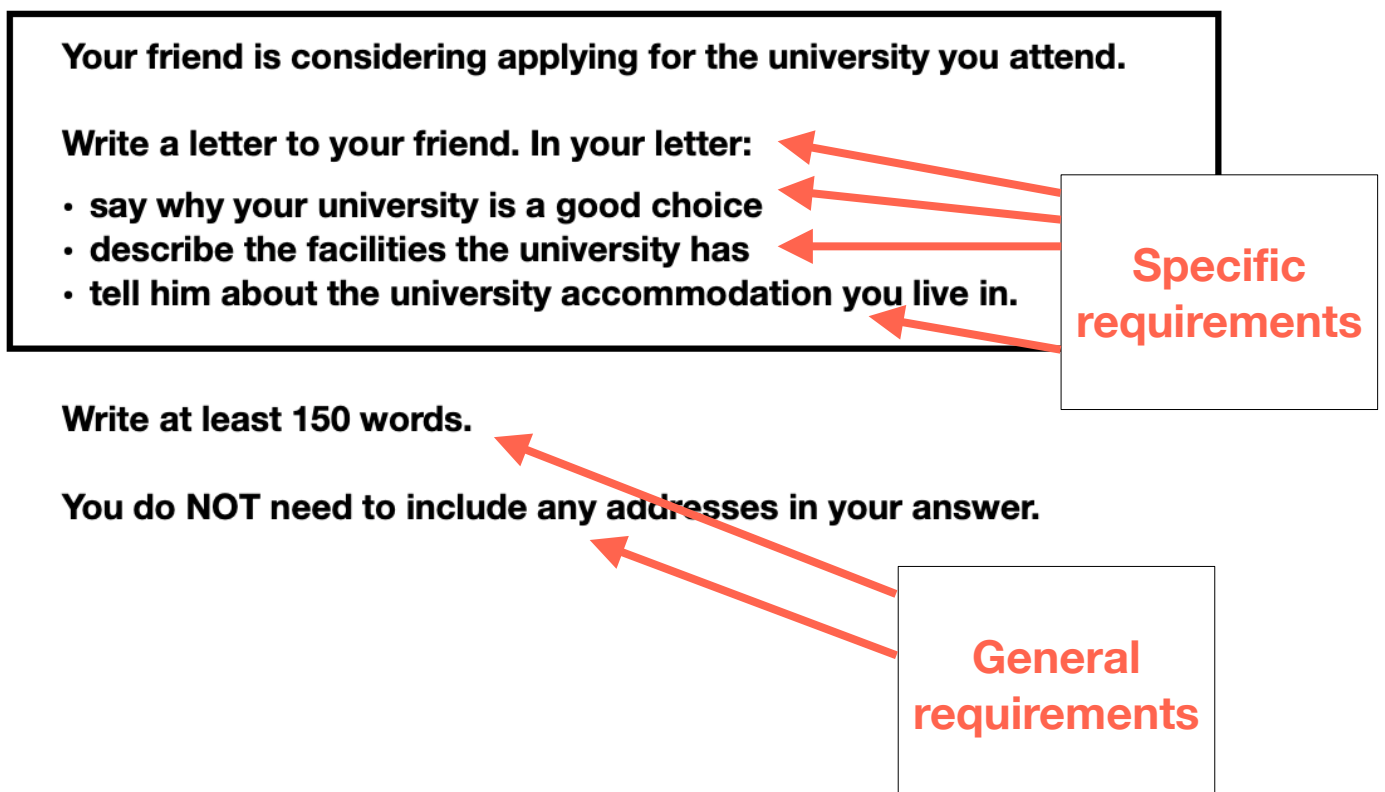
1. Specific requirements

- these are the 3 bullet points found in the question

2. General requirements

- these are found after the specific requirements

This diagram summarises the requirements:



Specific requirements are SPECIFIC to the particular letter (you won't know what they are until you see them in the exam).

General requirements are usually the same no matter what question you get asked. This means you can incorporate this knowledge when preparing for the IELTS. For example, all task 1 questions require you to write at least 150 words and you will usually be told not to include any addresses in such a question. Sometimes you may get additional instructions such as: '**Begin your letter as follows...**'. You must comply with these too.

We have split the requirements into 2 categories so you become an expert at analysing the question. In reality, you still need to adhere to all these instructions in the exam regardless of whether they are specific to the question or general.

Let's look at the specific requirements in more detail...

As part of the question analysis, it's important to uncover what the specific requirements are actually asking you to do. To do this, we advise that you highlight the key words from the bullet points. These are what you will base your letter around.

In your letter, you should write a full paragraph for each of the bullet points (we will show you how to do this later in the book).

Here's an example of how you would highlight the key words (shown below in yellow).

Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- say why your **university** is a **good choice**
- describe the **facilities** the university has
- tell him about the **university accommodation** you live in.

Specific requirements

Write at least 150 words.

You do NOT need to include any addresses in your answer.

So in this example, for bullet point 1, you should give some reasons why you think your university is a **good choice** for your friend.

For bullet point 2 you would describe some of the **facilities** which the university has to your friend.

For bullet point 3, you should tell your friend what your **university accommodation** is like.

Obviously you do not have all of the information you need to write the letter. Some details are not included in the bullet points. This is because this task is testing your ability to make up information which makes sense in a given situation.

**Tip!**

**You will have to make up some information in the letter.
This is one of the expectations of the examiner.**

Once you have completed these 3 steps in the exam, you should be able to tell:

- 1. The context of the letter**
- 2. What tone you should write your letter in**
- 3. The requirements of the task and the certain details you need to include.**

After you know this information, the next step is to start planning your letter. We will cover this in the next section.

IELTS Excellence Letter-Writing Frameworks

Frameworks are essential for all parts of the writing section. Without a proper structure to your letter, the examiner will have no choice but to penalise you and give you a low band score. For this reason, you **must** follow a proven framework for your answer.

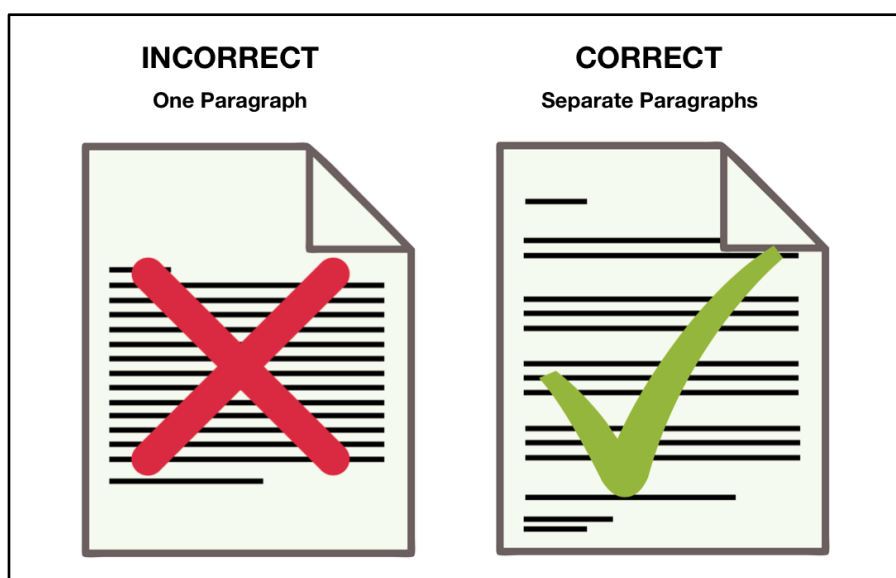
We have provided two letter-writing frameworks below. One for personal-style letters and one for formal-style letters. They are very similar, but there are some key defining features which you must be aware of.

We advise that you learn both of these frameworks, so you are able to recite them during the planning stage of your letter in the exam (see the 'IELTS Excellence Planning Strategy' section for more information).

Let's start by looking at an **incorrect** way to write a letter (this is what many unsuccessful students do). It is important to see what many students fail on, so you can avoid this in the exam.

Incorrect structure:

Many students who take the IELTS exam make the mistake of writing their letter as one big paragraph. They simply write one big block of writing. **DO NOT DO THIS! YOU WILL LOSE MARKS.**



As you can see from the diagram above, your letter should be structured into **individual paragraphs**, just like you would do in a task 2 essay. Not one big paragraph. This shows the examiner you can structure your writing appropriately and lay out your text in the correct way.

So, let's have a look at the best ways to structure a letter. On the following pages we show you the correct frameworks to use, depending on the letter type.

Correct frameworks to use in the exam:

Personal Letter Framework

Opening Line

e.g. 'Hello / Hi / Dear Harry...'

Pleasantries (Related To The Question)

A short, informal paragraph related to the context of the question.

Bullet Point 1 Paragraph

Answer bullet point 1, including any supporting information

Bullet Point 2 Paragraph

Answer bullet point 2, including any supporting information

Bullet Point 3 Paragraph

Answer bullet point 3, including any supporting information

Closing Statement Paragraph

A **friendly** closing statement (e.g. *I can't wait to see you!*)

Sign Off

e.g. 'Best wishes,'

****First name only****

Let's have a look at how we would use this framework in a real question...

Example personal question:

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Your friend is thinking about applying for another job as a school receptionist but is concerned that she will not impress at an interview.

Write a letter to them. It must include:

- **why you think she should stop worrying**
- **why you think she would make a great employee**
- **reasons why she needs to leave her current job**

Write at least 150 words.

We know this is a personal-style letter because you are asked to write a letter to a friend.

Let's look at the personal framework in more detail for this question.

• Opening Line

When you open a personal style letter, you should do it in a friendly way. We recommend using '**Dear...**' but you could also use '**Hello**' or '**Hi**'.

In addition, you **should always write the person's first name only**. Never write his/her surname in a personal letter.

• Pleasantry paragraph

In a personal letter, we recommend that you start with a friendly paragraph to demonstrate to the examiner that you recognise the personal tone of the letter. This is the 'pleasantry paragraph' and it must meet 2 criteria:

1. **It must be related to the context of the question & show the reason why you are writing the letter** (for this example - your friend's concerns about the job interview if she applies to be a school receptionist).
2. **It must be written in a 'friendly' tone** (to demonstrate that you personally know the person).

Here's an example of what you could write:

'I just want to put your mind at rest about your interview and remind you how fabulous you are!'

• Bullet Point 1 Paragraph

This is the next paragraph and you must answer the first bullet point in the question. In the example question above, for the 1st bullet point you must write **'why you think she should stop worrying'**.

You should use your imagination when writing your answer as you will not be given this information in the question. In other words, you will have to make your answer up. But don't worry - the examiner actually wants you to do this!

Here's an example of what you could write:

'You have all the skills required to do the receptionist job and you also have an amazing personality that will shine at the interview. I have every faith that you will make a great impression and I don't think you have anything to worry about.'

• Bullet Point 2 Paragraph

This should be written as a separate paragraph and it should answer the second bullet point in the question. In this case, the second bullet point asks you to write '**why you think she would make a great employee**'.

So, for example, you could write:

'You have great communication skills and your experience in customer service will make you an asset to the school. You're such a friendly and kind person and I know that you will put 100% into the job, which will make you an excellent employee.'

• Bullet Point 3 Paragraph

This paragraph should be related to the 3rd bullet point in the question. In our example, the 3rd bullet point requests that you include '**reasons why she needs to leave her current job**'. Remember, you should use your imagination!

Here's an example of what you could write for this:

'You have already mentioned that you really aren't enjoying your current role and I can see it is having an effect on your personal life, so I feel it would be best for you to move on to a job that you will be happy in.'

• Closing Statement Paragraph

The closing statement in a personal letter should be another short, friendly sentence (similar to the pleasantries paragraph).

One tip when thinking about what to write is to pretend you are speaking with your friend on the phone. How would you finish the conversation? You would say something friendly, but related to what you have been talking about. This is what the closing statement paragraph should contain.

In this case, you could write something like:

'I'll keep my fingers crossed and good luck!'

• Sign off

Signing off a personal letter is a lot different to a formal letter. We recommend using '**Best wishes**,' followed by your **first name** as your standard personal-style letter sign-off. Don't use your surname.

So, if we put all of the paragraphs together, our letter would look like this:

Dear Charlotte,

I just want to put your mind at rest about your interview and remind you how fabulous you are!

You have all the skills required to do the receptionist job and you also have an amazing personality that will shine at the interview. I have every faith that you will make a great impression and I don't think you have anything to worry about.

You have great communication skills and your experience in customer service will make you an asset to the school. You're such a friendly and kind person and I know that you will put 100% into the job, which will make you an excellent employee.

You have already mentioned that you really aren't enjoying your current role and I can see it is having an effect on your personal life, so I feel it would be best for you to move on to a job that you will be happy in.

I'll keep my fingers crossed and good luck!

*Best wishes,
Steven*

Now let's look at the framework for a FORMAL letter question...

Formal Letter Framework

Opening Line

'Dear Sir/Madam...'

Letter Purpose Paragraph

1 or 2 sentences about why you are writing to them
(e.g. *'I am writing this letter because...'*)

Bullet Point 1 Paragraph

Answer bullet point 1, including any supporting information

Bullet Point 2 Paragraph

Answer bullet point 2, including any supporting information

Bullet Point 3 Paragraph

Answer bullet point 3, including any supporting information

Closing Statement Paragraph

A request for action relating to the purpose of your letter
(e.g. *'I look forward to receiving a response from you.'*)

Sign Off

'Yours faithfully,' / 'Yours sincerely,'

****First Name & Surname****

Let's have a look at how we would use this framework in a real question...

Example formal question:

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You have received a letter from the hospital confirming an appointment. Unfortunately, you are unable to attend on the specified day due to work commitments.

Write a letter to the hospital manager to explain your situation. In your letter:

- **Say why you are unable to make the appointment**
- **Apologise and offer your availability for another appointment**
- **Ask what to expect at your hospital visit**

Write at least 150 words.

As you can see, this is a formal-style letter (because we are asked to write a letter to the hospital manager). So we would have to use the formal framework for our answer.

Let's look at the formal framework in more detail for this question.

• Opening Line

When you start writing a formal letter, the best option is to write 'Dear Sir/Madam'. This is deemed as formal. However, just remember that sometimes you are told how to open your letter in the instructions. It may say something like: '*Begin your letter as follows: **Dear Sir or Madam,***'.

You must always follow the instructions, so if they ask you to open your letter a certain way, you must make sure you do it the way they want.

• Letter Purpose Paragraph

In a formal letter, this paragraph should state the reason why you are writing the letter. Of course, there are many ways you can articulate this but we advise you keep it simple.

Here's an example of what you could write:

'I have just received an appointment notice from you and I am writing this letter to inform you that I will be unable to attend on this day.'

• Bullet Point 1 Paragraph

This must be a separate paragraph and you must answer the first bullet point. So for our example, you need to **'Say why you are unable to make the appointment'**.

Again, you should use your imagination when writing your answer as you will not be given this information in the question.

Here's an example of what you could write:

'Regrettably, I have a very important meeting at work on the day of the scheduled appointment, therefore I will be unable to attend and will need to organise another time for my consultation.'

• Bullet Point 2 Paragraph

This must be a separate paragraph and you must answer the second bullet point.

In our example, the second bullet point is: **'Apologise and offer your availability for another appointment'**.

Again, you need to use your imagination and make something up.

For example, you could write:

'I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause you, however I would be able to attend any time next Friday if an appointment is available. Alternatively, I am due to

take some annual leave at the end of the month so we can reschedule for then if this suits the doctor better.'

• Bullet Point 3 Paragraph

This should also be a separate paragraph. You must answer the third bullet point. In our example, this is: **'Ask what to expect at your hospital visit.'**

Here's an example of what you could write:

'Regarding the appointment, please can you let me know what will actually happen on the day and if there will be any further examinations I should be prepared for?'

• Closing Statement Paragraph

In a formal letter, the closing statement should show the recipient that you would like them to **take action**. This could be any type of action, but it should be relevant to the context of your letter.

Here are some examples:

Closing Statement Examples (Formal Letter):

- *'I look forward to hearing from you.'*
- *'Please could you find a resolution to this problem.'*
- *'I eagerly await your response.'*
- *'I am looking forward to hearing back from you.'*
- *'I would like to thank you in advance for looking into this matter.'*
- *'Thank you for giving your attention to this matter.'*

For our example, something like these would suffice:

'I look forward to hearing from you soon.' or *'Please could you contact me at your earliest convenience to discuss this further.'*

• Sign off

When signing-off a formal letter, there are a couple of rules you must follow:

RULE 1.

Use 'Yours faithfully' if you **DON'T** know the name of the person and 'Yours sincerely' if you **DO** know the name of the person.

Usually, a formal letter question won't give you the name of the person you are writing your letter to. It will just ask you to '**Write a letter to the manager**' or '**Write a letter to the company**' for example. In this case, you would sign off with '*Yours faithfully*'.

However, if the question DOES tell you the name of the person you are writing to, (for example '**Write a letter to Dr David Jones**'), then you would sign off using '*Yours sincerely*'.

RULE 2.

Always write your **full name** (first name & surname).

So, taking these 2 rules into account, for our example you would write:

*'Yours faithfully,
Heather Ray'*

Here you can make the name up. It's totally up to you. Although it's probably easier to just write your own name.

But you write **both** your **FIRST NAME** and **SURNAME** in a formal letter.

Here's a summary of how to open & sign off depending on whether you know the person's name:

Opening & Signing off

<p><u>Instruction:</u></p> <p>'Write a letter to the manager'</p> <p><u>Opening:</u></p> <p>'Dear <u>Sir/Madam</u>'</p> <p><u>Sign Off:</u></p> <p>'Yours <u>faithfully</u>, Sarah Bailey'</p>	<p><u>Instruction:</u></p> <p>'Write a letter to Mrs Smith'</p> <p><u>Opening:</u></p> <p>'Dear <u>Mrs Smith</u>'</p> <p><u>Sign Off:</u></p> <p>'Yours <u>sincerely</u>, Sarah Bailey'</p>
--	---

If you don't know the person's name =
'Dear Sir/Madam' & 'Yours faithfully'

If you do know the person's name = Dear
'Mr/Mrs....' & 'Yours sincerely'

****Note - this is ONLY to be used for FORMAL letters. Personal letters should be signed off differently - check the personal framework again for further information.***

So, if we put the framework paragraphs together, our letter would look like this:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have just received an appointment notice from you and I am writing this letter to inform you that I will be unable to attend on this day.

Regrettably, I have a very important meeting at work on the day of the scheduled appointment, therefore I will be unable to attend and will need to organise another time for my consultation.

I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause you, however I would be able to attend any time next Friday if an appointment is available. Alternatively, I am due to take some annual leave at the end of the month so we can reschedule for then if this suits the doctor better.

Regarding the appointment, please can you let me know what will actually happen on the day and if there will be any further examinations I should be prepared for?

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

Heather Ray

***Note - This answer is estimated to be band 7.5 - 8.0.**

We have dozens of formal & personal question examples in our
[General Writing Practice Questions & Model Answers](#)
[Workbook.](#)

They also contain band 7, 8 and 9 model answers! So you can see exactly what you need to write to achieve success in the writing section!

IELTS Excellence Letter Planning Strategy

Why should I make a plan?

Planning your answer is crucial to success. Think of it as planning your route to a new place you are driving to. The things you need to know are:

1. Where you are **starting from**
2. Where you're going to **finish your journey**
3. How you are going to **get there** (the correct way)

Similarly, when you plan an IELTS writing answer, you need to know:

1. What information you have to **start with**
2. What you need to do to **finish the answer correctly**
3. How you are going to **write your answer (the correct information and methods)**

When we say 'plan', we mean a very brief outline of what you are going to write and how you are going to do it.

Basically, if you have followed our advice on how to analyse a question and understand the frameworks, you will know exactly how and what to write. But making a quick plan in the exam will help keep you on track and lead to a better band score.

Where do you make the plan?

You should write the plan on the actual **question** paper (not your **answer** paper). Once the exam is over, the papers will be collected, but the examiner will **not** see the question paper, they will only see your answer paper!

Here is an example of what the question paper and answer paper will look like in the exam. It also shows where you need to do the plan:

Question Paper

Answer Paper

Writing Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.




Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- say why your university is a good choice
- describe the facilities the university has
- tell him about the university accommodation you live in.


Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to include any addresses in your answer.

**** Do your plan here ****



IELTS Writing Answer Sheet – TASK 1



Candidate Name

Centre Number

Module (shade one box): Academic ☐ General Training ☐

Test date

D D M M Y Y Y Y

TASK 1

Do not write below this line


100913/2

How do you write a plan?

Below is an example question followed by a list of the different stages involved in planning the answer for a simple formal letter question. Your plan should take between **3-5 minutes**.

Your plan should follow the personal letter or formal letter framework (see the framework section in this book as a reminder).

If you don't practice writing a plan, you will struggle. I can't emphasise enough how important it is to practice!



Tip!

You should practice writing a plan many times, so you are able to do it quickly and easily in the exam.

Here's the sample question:

Writing Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- **say why your university is a good choice**
- **describe the facilities the university has**
- **tell him about the university accommodation you live in.**

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to include any addresses in your answer.

Let's look at the steps involved in writing a plan for this question:

Step 1: Decide on the 'tone' (this is done as part of your question analysis)

The thing to do is find out who you are writing the letter to. If it's to a friend or relative, it is a personal style letter. If it is to anyone else, it is formal.

Writing Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Friend = PERSONAL
FRAMEWORK

Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- say why your university is a good choice
- describe the facilities the university has
- tell him about the university accommodation you live in.

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to include any addresses in your answer.

Step 2: Outline the correct framework (Personal or Formal)

In this case, the framework is **personal**, because we are asked to write a letter to a **friend**.

You can see that there are 3 main parts to this framework: The **1. Opening + Pleasantry paragraph**, **2. The bullet point paragraphs** and **3. Closing + Sign off paragraph**. However, each one has to be kept separate!!

Writing Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Friend = PERSONAL
FRAMEWORK

Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- say why your university is a good choice
- describe the facilities the university has
- tell him about the university accommodation you live in.

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to include any addresses in your answer.

[OPENING

[PLEASANTRY

[BULLET POINT 1

[BULLET POINT 2

[BULLET POINT 3

[CLOSING

[SIGN OFF

Step 3: Write down 2 or 3 ideas for each bullet point (highlight the key words).

This is where you have to start using some imagination. You have to make up some information because it isn't given to you in the question. We advise choosing 2 or 3 things for each bullet point. It doesn't matter what you choose, as long as it's **relevant**. You can see how we have done this in **blue**...

Writing Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- say why your university is a good choice
- describe the facilities the university has
- tell him about the university accommodation you live in.

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to include any addresses in your answer.

Friend = PERSONAL FRAMEWORK

OPENING

PLEASANTRY

BULLET POINT 1 - 'GOOD CHOICE' — Helpful lecturers
— Good sports teams
— Great for your course

BULLET POINT 2 - 'FACILITIES' — Big library
— 24/7 access
— Student areas are relaxing

BULLET POINT 3 - 'ACCOMMODATION' — Close to the uni
— Spacious rooms
— Have own bathroom

CLOSING

SIGN OFF

Step 4: Write down the ways you are going to start the opening, pleasantry, closing and sign off paragraphs.

These act as prompts for you when writing your letter. The 'Opening' and 'Sign off' part are standard - they can be the same for any personal style letter. The others are more specific to the context of the question you get asked.

Writing Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Friend = PERSONAL
FRAMEWORK

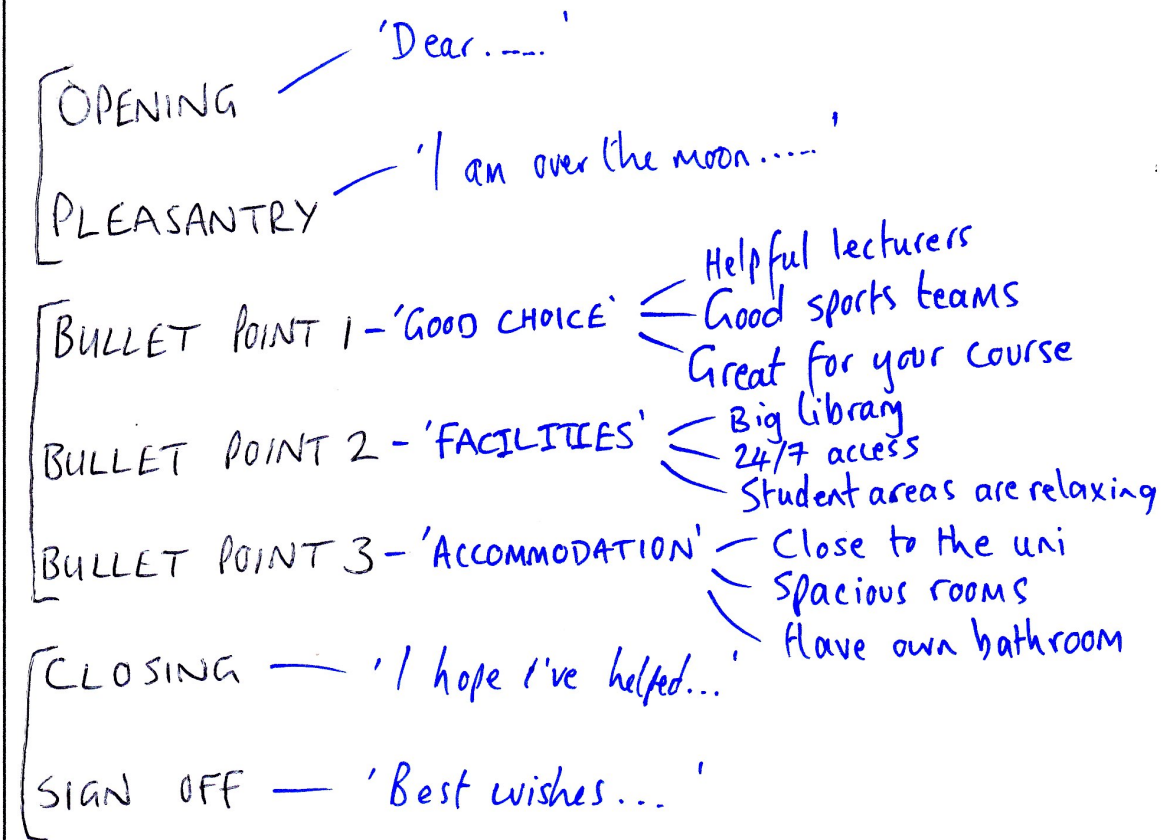
Your friend is considering applying for the university you attend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- say why your university is a good choice
- describe the facilities the university has
- tell him about the university accommodation you live in.

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to include any addresses in your answer.



Here is a breakdown of the plan (remember this is for a personal-style letter):

Opening

This is the starting point of your letter. In some circumstances, you will be told how to open your letter. In this case you aren't told how to start your letter, so '*Dear...*' is the easiest and safest option.

Pleasantries

This is a short, friendly paragraph which relates to the topic of the letter (in this case, about your friend applying for the university you attend). It also demonstrates your personal relationship with the recipient of the letter.

In other words, it is a way for you to show the examiner that you **1. know what the question is about** and **2. that you can write in a friendly way**.

In this example, we have started the pleasantries paragraph with '*over the moon*', which is an idiom we mention in the **Idiom Bank** section of this book. Idioms are a great way to show the examiner you are friendly with the person you are writing the letter to.

Bullet Point 1

This paragraph is dedicated to saying why the university is a good choice for students. In our example, we have included points such as the lecturers are helpful, the university is a great choice for your friends particular course and the sports teams are good.

Bullet Point 2

This paragraph mentions some of the university facilities available for students. We have decided to discuss the large library, 24 hour access and the relaxing student communal areas.

Bullet Point 3

For this paragraph, we are expected to tell our friend about the university accommodation. As you can see in the plan, we have chosen to write about the

accommodation's close proximity to university, the large rooms and the private bathrooms.

Closing Statement

This should be another short, friendly sentence (similar to the pleasantry). It again emphasises the fact you have a personal relationship with the recipient of the letter.

Sign off

This is the last bit of the letter. Because this is a personal letter, you must sign off in a friendly way (not formal).

Here's a model answer for this question using the planning strategy:

Model answer

Dear Joshua,

I am over the moon that you are considering going to my university, you'll have the time of your life!

The University of Leeds is one of the best universities in the country for your course and the lecturers are all so helpful and knowledgeable. There is also a lot of opportunities for you to continue with your netball as they have a great team.

The university campus has so many great facilities, including a huge library that is open 24 hours a day to allow you to study whenever you like. The Student Union has recently had a face lift and is the perfect place to relax with friends after a busy week of lectures.

I live in the Opal accommodation, which is actually attached to the campus so it is ideal for me to roll out of bed in the morning and straight into lectures! The rooms are spacious and I have my own bathroom, which is a luxury.

I hope I've helped you make up your mind.

*Best wishes,
Sam*

How will my plan differ for a formal style letter?

We have covered the 4 steps in planning a PERSONAL letter. This is based around the **personal letter framework**.

However, planning a formal letter would generally follow the same 4 steps. The only difference is that in **STEP 2** you would use the **formal letter framework** instead of the **personal letter framework** (check out the **Formal Letter Framework** section in this book to remind yourself).

There is no 'pleasantry' paragraph in a formal letter, but instead, there is a paragraph explaining the purpose of your letter. Hence, the outline of the plan would be slightly different.

Even for a formal letter, you should still write down the ways you intend to start each paragraph (**STEP 4**).

Why is a plan important?

Without a plan, your answer would not follow the correct structure and you would lose track of what you are meant to be writing about. If you stick to a plan, you know you will write a well-rounded answer.

It is a well-known fact that students who use a plan in the exam will score better than a student who does not use a plan.

It should only take you **3-5 minutes** to do this, so you still have at least 15 minutes to write your answer, which is plenty of time.

Trust us, you will be able to write your answer faster if you write a plan!



Remember!

Planning your answer actually saves you time.

Now it's your turn!

On the next page is a general writing task 1 question. Make sure you **print this page off** and write a plan for it using the 4 steps above. Pretend you are in the real exam - time yourself.

At first, the plan may take you more than 3-5 minutes, but the more you practice, the quicker you will become. The aim is to be able to write a plan to any question within 3-5 minutes.

The question is taken from our General Writing Practice Questions & Model Answers Workbook.

[If you would like to see a model answer for it, along with dozens of other Task 1 & Task 2 writing questions + model answers, visit our premium product page here.](#)

Writing Task 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You have just started to learn how to drive and your driving instructor has asked you to recommend him to your friends.

Write a letter to a friend. In your letter, include:

- **what you like about the driving instructor**
- **how many lessons you have had**
- **how much each lesson costs**

Write at least 150 words.

PRINT THIS PAGE AND WRITE A PLAN USING THE STRATEGY ABOVE

Band Score Booster: Using Your Imagination To Maximise Your Success

There are certain things you can do when writing your letter which will really boost your band score from band 5 (or below) to band 7 (or above).

One of the best ways to boost your band score is by **using your imagination**. By using your imagination, you will write in more detail and make your letter more fluent and natural.

Below are the band descriptors for a band 4 answer and a band 7 answer. We have highlighted the parts of these band descriptors which are directly related to using your imagination in the exam.

Band 4 Answer:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ attempts to address the task but does not cover all key features/bullet points; the format may be inappropriate▪ (General Training) fails to clearly explain the purpose of the letter; the tone may be inappropriate▪ may confuse key features/bullet points with detail; parts may be unclear, irrelevant, repetitive or inaccurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response▪ uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task▪ has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses▪ some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
---	---	--	---

If you don't use your imagination when writing the letter, you are likely to score band 4 or less. Why is this? Because a lack of imagination will mean:

- You will fail to cover all parts of the question (low word count, lack of detail etc)
- The 'tone' will not be consistent (the examiner may not be able to tell if the tone is correct due to a lack of expression)
- There will be a lack of progression in your writing
- You will not demonstrate a sufficient range of vocabulary & complex structures

Let's look at how using your imagination will help you achieve band 7 (or above)...

Band 7 Answer:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">covers the requirements of the task(Academic) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages(General Training) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriateclearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended	<ul style="list-style-type: none">logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughoutuses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precisionuses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocationmay produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a variety of complex structuresproduces frequent error-free sentenceshas good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
--	--	--	---

By using your imagination, you are more likely to:

- Cover all requirements of the task (e.g. write over 150 words, answer the bullet points adequately)
- Write in a consistent tone (which is easily identifiable)
- Have good progression and logical, fluent writing
- Demonstrate a good range of vocabulary and grammar

The two MAJOR reasons why a lack of imagination leads to a poor band score are:

- You are not being descriptive enough
- You can't write enough words

Both of these errors will negatively impact your score, in particular the 'Task Achievement' band descriptor which makes up 25% of your overall score, and therefore you will struggle to score more than a band 4.

So, how can using your imagination help to boost your score?

Let's discuss...

Quite often when you first look at the letter question, you think to yourself 'How am I going to write over 150 words to cover these 3 bullet points?' This is where being imaginative is **crucial**. Essentially, 'using your imagination' means making up some

details for each of the bullet points. This is what the examiner actually wants you to do - fill in the missing details. However, **you must keep it relevant to the question.**

Let's look at an example question where the answers could be a few words but we will expand on the responses by using our imaginations:

You would like to make an appointment to see your doctor.

Write a letter to the doctor's surgery to arrange an appointment. In your letter, include:

- **When you would like the appointment**
- **The reason for your appointment**
- **How to contact you to confirm the appointment.**

Write at least 150 words

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear... ,

If we were to simply answer the bullet points above without using our imagination, your answer may be too short and look something like this...

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to request an appointment to see the doctor.

I would like to see the doctor on Friday afternoon.

The reason for my appointment is because I have a cough.

Please call me on 0123 456 789 to confirm.

Yours faithfully,

June Briggs

Word Count: 47

In this example, we haven't answered the bullet points fully and we definitely haven't written anywhere near 150 words - so we have failed to fulfil the requirements of the question. In addition, the range of vocabulary is poor (because we haven't written much), there is a lack of complex structures and there is no 'flow' to the letter. Pretty poor effort, right? It's almost as if it has been written by a robot.

The examiner would certainly think it was an uninspiring answer and you would certainly score less than band 5, which isn't good news for you.

This is why your imagination needs to come into play and why you need to elaborate on the points to add detail to your paragraphs.

Let's try again using a bit of imagination...

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to request an appointment to see Dr Smith at the Carlisle Medical Centre. I have taken some medication given to me over the counter at the pharmacy but this does not seem to have alleviated my symptoms so I believe Dr Smith will be able to assist.

I would like to see the doctor on Friday afternoon, ideally after 1pm because I am looking after my grandson in the morning. If this is not convenient for Dr Smith, I will be available all day on Monday.

The reason I require medical attention is due to a cough that started one week ago and has got progressively worse, even though I have been taking cough medicine.

Please can you call me on 0123 456 789 to confirm my appointment, ideally after 2pm as I am usually out running errands in the mornings.

Yours faithfully,

June Briggs

Word Count: 150

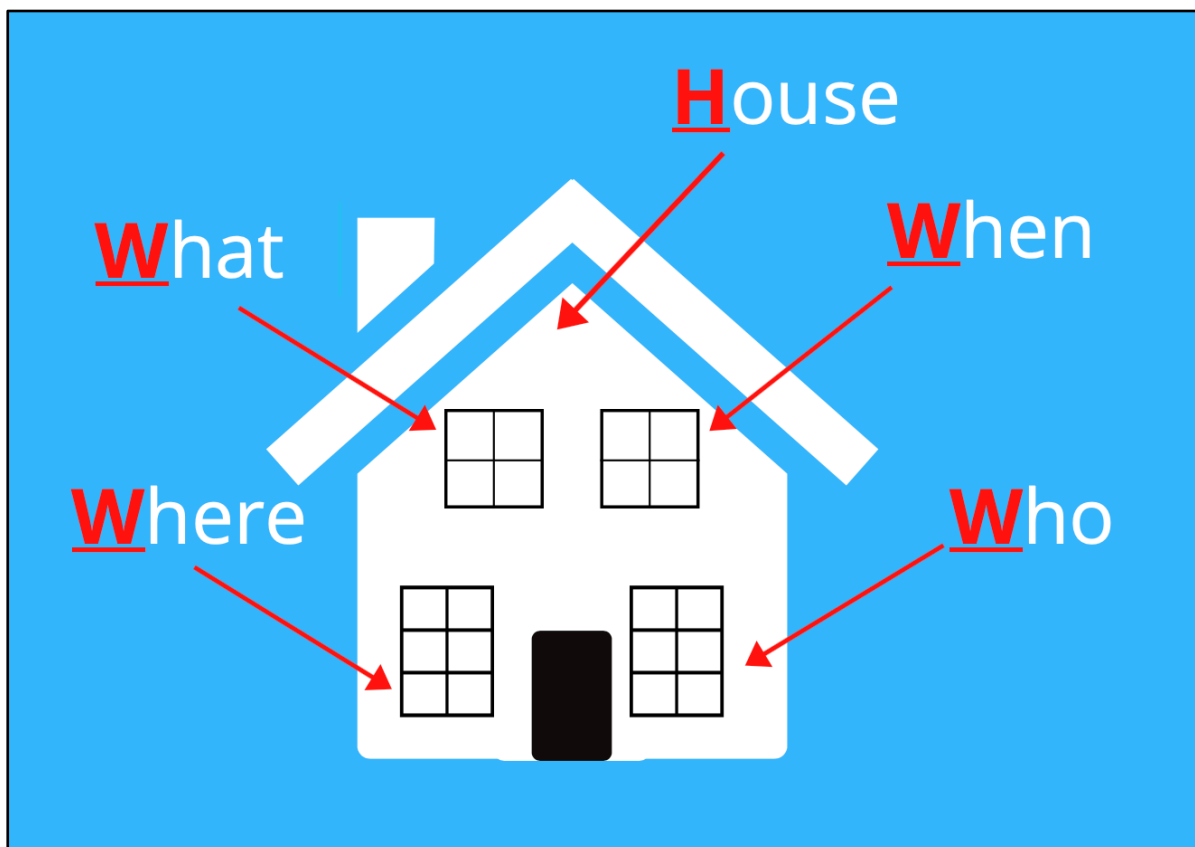
As you can see, this letter uses more imagination to elaborate on the original paragraphs and has led to an increased word count from 47 to 150 words.

We have fully answered all 3 bullet points and have followed the specific requirements of the task. Our range of vocabulary is broader, we have used a suitable number of complex structures and the overall fluency is increased. All because we have used our imagination. This is guaranteed to increase the band score in any question - as long as you keep it relevant!

It is important to get the balance right, however. You don't want to put lots of irrelevant details in your letter. Just enough to add a little bit of context - just as if you were having a conversation with someone!

How Do You Use Your Imagination?

One of the best ways to stimulate your imagination is by using the '**A House with 4 Windows**' technique.



Ever remember drawing houses when you were younger? Or asking a young relative to draw a house? For some reason, the house often has 4 windows.

This is a great way to remind yourself of how to use your imagination to generate ideas for your letter.

Let me explain using this phrase...

'A House with 4 Windows'

The '**H**' in the word '**House**' relates to the question '**How?**' and the '**W**' in each of the 4 '**Windows**' relates to '**What?**', '**Where?**', '**Who?**', '**When?**'.

Now, pretend you are chatting with the recipient of your letter on the phone. You are having a discussion about the topic of the question and the person is asking lots of questions to get more information from you, such as '**How?**', '**What?**', '**Where?**', '**Who?**', '**When?**'.

By imagining that you are having a conversation with the recipient and remembering the phrase '**A House with 4 Windows**', you will automatically trigger your subconscious imagination. This is how you generate content ideas for your letter.

Here's an example question (bullet point):

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You would like to apply for a government-funded research project run by your local council.

Write a letter to the local council research team. In your letter include:

- ***Request an address for the local restaurant***

Write at least 150 words.
Begin your letter as follows:
(Date,)

In the example above, you are asked to request the address of a local restaurant. Obviously, you need to use your imagination. Let's look at a poor answer and one where you use your imagination...

Poor answer (no imagination used):

'What is the address of the restaurant?'

Good answer (using the 'House with 4 Windows' technique):

*'Please could you give me the address of the **Italian restaurant** in **Hoxley village**, as I wish to visit there with a **close friend** who is visiting **over the weekend**.'*

You can see that we have used the 'House with 4 Windows' technique to help with our answer:

'What': Italian restaurant

'Where': Hoxley Village

'Who': (Visit with) a close friend

'When': Over the weekend

You will notice that we have not included the '**How**' part, which is perfectly fine. When using this technique, you **don't** have to use all 4 Ws and the H. As long as you use **some** of them to guide your imagination.



Remember!

It is important to stay relevant to the task and not go over the top with lots of irrelevant 'waffle'. Don't force details which do not 'fit'.

Identifying The Correct Tone For Your Letter

We have already mentioned how you would identify the tone of the letter, but let's recap - it's one of the most important things to get right...

Personal Tone

There are only 2 scenarios when you would write a personal letter. This will be when you are asked to write a letter to either a **friend (or an acquaintance such as a close colleague or classmate)** or a **relative**.

A great way to ensure you keep your letter personal is by imagining you are speaking to your friend or relative and use similar casual language.

In the exam, the personal question may say something like:

'Write a letter to your friend...'

'Write a letter to your classmate...'

'Write a letter to your sister...'

Formal Tone

A formal letter is appropriate when writing to someone you either do not know, or only know in a professional capacity. Another way to think of it would be that a formal style is used for anyone who is not a friend or relative, so this could include your manager at work, your doctor or a representative of a company.

In the exam, the formal question may say something like:

'Write a letter to your local politician...'

'Write a letter to your doctor...'

'Write a letter to the electricity company...'

Personal vs Formal Letter Comparison

Once you have identified the tone of the letter, it is really important to make sure your language and grammar reflects the tone you have been asked to write in.

Let's look at an example. Below are two questions, which are nearly identical. However, one asks you to write a letter to a **friend** (personal) and the other asks you to write a letter to a **manager** (formal).

1st example (PERSONAL question):

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You recently went to Spain and your hotel was unsatisfactory.

Write a letter to your friend and include the following:

- **Why the hotel was unsatisfactory**
- **The impact it had on your holiday**
- **What would have improved your experience**

Write at least 150 words.

Example PERSONAL letter:

Hi Kim,

I hope you had a great trip to Mexico last month!

We have just returned from Spain and we had a terrible experience, which is annoying as it cost an arm and a leg! We stayed at the Sunset Hotel, as it claimed to be a stones-throw from the main beach and restaurants. Unfortunately this couldn't have been further from the truth and we had to get an unreliable shuttle bus everywhere.

As you know, we love to explore when we go to new places and the inconvenience of being in the middle of nowhere ruined our experience and we didn't feel like we managed to see much of Spain at all. We spent most of the time around the pool!

The only way we'd have been able to enjoy the trip was if the manager had offered to move us to their sister hotel 3 miles away, so that it was closer to the beach and the town centre.

Anyway, enough of my moaning. Let's catch up next week for a coffee!

Best Wishes,

Tony

Now let's compare this with a FORMAL version of the question...

2nd example (FORMAL question).

Note the subtle difference from the PERSONAL question above:

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You recently went to Spain and your hotel was unsatisfactory.

Write a letter to the manager of the travel company you booked with and include the following:

- **Why the hotel was unsatisfactory**
- **The impact it had on your holiday**
- **What would have improved your experience.**

Write at least 150 words.

Example FORMAL letter (Note the difference in framework, vocabulary and grammar):

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have recently returned from a trip to Spain that I booked with Sunny Holidays and would like to express my dissatisfaction about our holiday.

Your travel consultant assured us that the Sunset Hotel was in a perfect location for us, as we wanted to be close to the main beach and restaurants. However, we were extremely disappointed when we arrived to find everything was a bus ride away and there were no amenities nearby. Furthermore, the bus itself was very unreliable.

As a result, we struggled to enjoy our holiday and found ourselves being forced to plan our days around the timetable of the shuttle bus. This meant we did not actually do much and spent most of our time around the pool.

It would have been beneficial to us if we were transferred to the sister hotel near to the beach, but the manager told us this was not possible.

I look forward to receiving a response from you.

Yours Faithfully,

Tony Gardiner

As you can see, the PERSONAL and FORMAL questions are very similar. The **personal** question asks you to write the letter to a **friend**, whereas the **formal** question asks you to write the letter to the **manager of the travel company**.

This subtle difference in the question changes the tone of your answer completely. This is why it is so important to be able to decide on the tone.

In the formal answer, there is no pleasantries. Instead, there is a sentence explaining the reason for the letter. The opening and closing parts of the letter are different, along with the language used and grammar. However, most noticeably, the vocabulary and grammar are completely different. We will look at this in more detail below.

Personal vs. Formal Letter:

Bonus Phrases

There are many phrases that can be used in personal & formal letters regardless of the subject. Learning some useful phrases will allow you to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary accurately, but you must use the right tone.

Here are some examples:

	Personal Tone Phrases (using contractions)	Formal Tone Phrases (no contractions)
Apologising	I'm really sorry for...' 'I'm sorry to tell you...'	Please accept my sincere apologies for...' 'I regret to inform you...'
Showing you're thankful	'Thanks for...'	'Thank you for...'
Showing you're very thankful	'I can't thank you enough for...'	'I am extremely grateful for...'
Showing concern	'I'm really worried about...'	'I would like to express my concern about...'
Showing unhappiness about something	'I'm really unhappy with...'	'I am extremely dissatisfied about...'
Showing happiness about something	'I'm so happy to tell you...'	'I am delightful to advise you...'
Asking for a favour	'I'd love it if you could...'	'I would appreciate it if you could...'
Hinting you would like a response	'I can't wait to hear from you...'	'I look forward to hearing from you.'
Saying you will contact them again soon	I'll be in again touch soon.'	'I will be in contact with you again soon.'

The Correct Use Of Contractions In A Band 7+ Letter

If you use formal language in a personal letter (or vice versa), you will be marked down by the examiner for not identifying the correct style of writing needed. If you get a personal style letter in the exam, one of the best ways you can show the examiner that you understand the tone of the letter is by including contractions in your answer.

****Contractions are only used in friendly, personal conversation so should not be used in formal letters.****

What is a contraction?

A contraction is a single word which is a combination (a contraction) of two words. It contains an apostrophe (') where there are missing letters.

For example :

I'm is a contraction of ***I*** and ***am***

We're is a contraction of ***We*** and ***are***

Hadn't is a contraction of ***Had*** and ***not***

Let me repeat this again because it's really important: **Don't use contractions in a formal letter.**

Here's some comparisons between formal & personal styles, including contractions:

Formal:

'I am available for a meeting on Friday.'

Personal:

'I'm fine to meet up on Friday.'

Formal:

'I would appreciate it if you could confirm a time.'

Personal:

'I'd appreciate you letting me know a time.'

Formal:

'I look forward to meeting with you.'

Personal:

'I can't wait to see you.'

Formal:

'I would like to extend my gratitude to you for allowing me to stay overnight.'

Personal:

'I can't thank you enough for letting me stay at your place last night.'

The use of contractions is really a simple topic, so I won't labour over it any more. Just remember to include some in a personal style letter, but not a formal letter.

The Correct Use Of Idioms In A Band 7+ Letter

Idioms are great! But you should only use them when writing a **personal style** letter because it makes the letter informal (almost like you are having a chat with a friend). **Never use Idioms in a formal-style letter.**

For those of you who are native English speakers, you will be familiar with some idioms as we use them on a daily basis. Usually we don't even realise when we are using them.

One or two idioms are good to use in your letter, because it shows the examiner that you are fluent enough in English to be able to use slang phrases correctly in your writing.



Beware!

Idioms should ONLY be used if you are writing a PERSONAL STYLE letter.

Never use them if you are writing a formal letter.

What is an idiom?

An idiom is a phrase that means something different to the literal meaning of the individual words.

For example, 'hit the nail on the head' does not mean to actually hit a nail but instead means to get something exactly correct.

For this reason, idioms can be difficult to 'get your head around' and therefore very hard to master and implement into the English language if it is not familiar to you.

You MUST use idioms correctly!

One of the biggest mistakes our students make is learning a list of idioms and then just putting some in to their letters just because they think using idioms will give them a higher score. This couldn't be further from the truth.

Idioms are a great way to show the examiner that you have a great understanding of the English language, but if you use them in the wrong context you risk being marked down.

In other words, it is good to learn a small list of idioms, but you must understand how they are used correctly.

Below is our task 1 idiom bank. It gives you a list of idioms which are relatively general, so you should be able to use at least 1 or 2 of them in your task 1 letter (as long it is a personal style letter to a friend or relative).

Bonus Idiom Bank

Here's a list of idioms we advise you learn:

Idiom 1

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'Over the moon'	Overjoyed, extremely happy	'I am over the moon that you are able to come to my birthday party next month'.

Idiom 2

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'Under the weather'	Feeling unwell	'I'm so sorry but I won't be able to go to the cinema tomorrow because I am feeling under the weather '.

Idiom 3

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'Heard on the grapevine'	Heard a rumour	'I heard on the grapevine that the new restaurant in town has been closed down due to poor hygiene'.

Idiom 4

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'Piece of cake'	Very easy	'For you, the exam will be a piece of cake '.

Idiom 5

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'Every cloud has a silver lining'	Every bad situation will eventually have a good outcome	'Sorry you didn't get the job, but every cloud has a silver lining '.

Idiom 6

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'Go the extra mile'	Do more than is expected	'You should try my hairdressers; they really go the extra mile and make you feel a million dollars'.

Idiom 7

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'Over the top'	Excessive, a disproportionate amount (higher)	'My family went over the top with my graduation celebrations but I know they just wanted to make me feel special'.

Idiom 8

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'Rule of thumb'	A rule/habit that you always try to obey	'As a rule of thumb , I don't like to eat out more than once a week'.

Idiom 9

Idiom	Meaning	Example
'It cost an arm and a leg'	Very expensive	'My new laptop for university cost an arm and a leg but I think it was worth it'.

Remember, if you misuse idioms you will be penalised in the exam. Our advice would be to learn a **small list** of idioms that can be used in most situations (like the ones listed above) and make sure you **fully understand** when and how to use them, so you can incorporate them correctly into your letter if the chance arises.

It's pointless learning niche idioms like '*it's raining cats and dogs*' (which means it's raining very heavily) because it is very unlikely that you would be able to use it in your letter (unless you had to tell a friend about heavy rain, of course).

On the other hand, learning broader idioms like 'over the moon' would be useful because it means 'really happy' so can be applied to many situations.

IELTS Excellence Band 7+


Letter Synonym Bank

Learning a short list of letter synonyms can be very helpful in task 1, because it gives you the opportunity to use different words in different situations - resulting in a letter with a more natural 'flow'.

We don't recommend learning really long lists of synonyms. Quality is better than quantity. We have included some synonyms below which can often be used in formal and personal letter (although this is not always the case). Learn them and **most importantly understand how to use them!**

****Note to native speakers - you may want to skip past this part.**

Personal Letter Synonyms

<div><div>IELTS Excellence</div><div>PERSONAL LETTER Synonyms</div><div>Score-boosting synonyms with a personal tone</div></div>	
BASE WORD	SYNONYMS
DEAR (opening letter)	Hi, Hello, Hey
GREAT	Awesome, Brilliant, Fantastic
FRIEND	Mate, Pal, Buddy
MEET UP	Catch up, Get-together
BEST WISHES (Sign off)	All the best, Speak soon, Catch you later

Sentence examples:

Base Word:

Dear (to open a personal letter)

'Dear Josh!'

Synonyms:

- **Hi** (to open a personal letter)

'Hi Josh!'

- **Hello** (to open a personal letter)

'Hello Josh!'

- **Hey** (to open a personal letter)

'Hey Josh!'

Base Word:

Great

*'It was **great** seeing you the other night!'*

Synonyms:

- **Awesome**

*'It was **awesome** seeing you the other night!'*

- **Brilliant**

*'It was **brilliant** seeing you the other night!'*

- **Fantastic**

*'It was **fantastic** seeing you the other night!'*

Base Word:

Friend (Can be informal and formal)

*'I just want to let you know that you're the best **friend** ever!'*

Synonyms:

- **Mate** (British informal)

*'I just want to let you know that you're the best **mate** ever!'*

- **Pal** (British informal)

*'I just want to let you know that you're the best **pal** ever!'*

- **Buddy** (British & American informal)

*'I just want to let you know that you're the best **buddy** ever!'*

Base Word:

Meet up

*'We should arrange to **meet up** soon!'*

Synonyms:

- **Catch up**

*'We should arrange to **catch up** soon!'*

- **Get-together** (A 'get-together')

*'We should arrange a **'get-together'** soon!'*

Base Word:

Best wishes (letter sign off)

*'Best wishes,
Sarah'*

Synonyms:

- **All the best** (letter sign off)

*'All the best,
Sarah'*

- **Speak soon** (letter sign off)

*'Speak soon,
Sarah'*

- **Catch you later** (letter sign off)

*'Catch you later,
Sarah'*

Formal Letter Synonyms



FORMAL LETTER Synonyms

Score-boosting synonyms with a formal tone

BASE WORD	SYNONYMS
ADVISE ('writing to advise you...')	Inform, Notify
SUGGEST ('Can I suggest...')	Recommend, Propose
REQUEST ('I request...')	Ask, Require, I would like
UNHAPPY ('I am unhappy...')	Dissatisfied, Discontented, Disgruntled
HAPPY	Contented, Cheerful, Delighted

Sentence examples:

Base Word:

Advise

*'I am writing to **advise** you that I cannot make the appointment.'*

Synonyms:

- Inform**

*'I am writing to **inform** you that I cannot make the appointment.'*

- Notify**

*'I am writing to **notify** you that I cannot make the appointment.'*

Base Word:

Suggest

*'Can I **suggest** that you keep the waiting room more tidy in future.'*

Synonyms:

- **Recommend**

*'I would like to **recommend** that you keep the waiting room more tidy in future.'*

- **Propose**

*'I would like to **propose** a plan to keep the waiting room more tidy in future.'*

Base Word:

Request

*'I **request** the details of the store manager.'*

Synonyms:

- **Ask** (more polite)

*'Can I **ask** for the details of the store manager, please.'*

- **Require**

*'I **require** the details of the store manager.'*

- **I would like** (more polite)

*'I **would like** the details of the store manager, please.'*

Base Word:

Unhappy

*'I am **unhappy** about the way you handled my original concern.'*

Synonyms:

- **Dissatisfied**

*'I am **dissatisfied** about the way you handled my original concern.'*

- **Discontented**

*'I am **discontented** about the way you handled my original concern.'*

- **Disgruntled**

*'I am **disgruntled** about the way you handled my original concern.'*

Base Word:

Happy

*'I am really **happy** with your job offer and I would love to take the position.'*

Synonyms:

- **Contented** (mild happiness)

*'I feel quite **contented** about my career at the moment. I cannot think of a reason to apply for a new job.'*

- **Cheerful** (moderate happiness)

*'I am really **cheerful** about my career at the moment. It is heading in the right direction and I do not have a reason to apply for a new job.'*

- **Delighted** (Very happy)

*'I am **delighted** with my new job offer because I have been wanting this position for a considerable amount of time.'*

The 3 Essential Synonym Secrets

Many students are unaware of how synonyms should be used in a well-written letter. They fail to identify the key ways you can impress the examiner by using synonyms correctly. Below we will cover some essential information you must consider when using synonyms.

Secret 1. The synonyms you use is dependant on the tone of the letter

Some synonyms can change a word from being a formal to personal style and vice versa. For example, 'child' is a formal term for a young person, but 'kid' is often considered to be a more personal or informal term.

Another example is the word 'friend', whose synonyms include 'mate' and 'pal'. The word 'friend' can be used in both formal and personal letters, but 'mate' and 'pal' could only be used correctly in a personal-style letter.

Quite often, synonyms are 'shortened' versions of words. This can make a formal word very personal.

For example, you could refer to something as 'fab' which is short for 'fabulous'. However, this is a very casual way of writing and is not acceptable when writing a formal letter.

To summarise, using synonyms incorrectly can have an impact on the style of your letter and therefore affect your overall IELTS score.

Secret 2. Not all synonyms are equal

Some students think that a synonym can be used in exactly the same way as the original word, but this is often incorrect!

Not all synonyms are equal. For example, let's take the word 'travel'. Some synonyms for 'travel' include 'move', 'tour' and 'journey'.

However, these words can't all be used exactly the same, as we will discuss below:

Example 1: 'Travel'

'One of my dreams is to travel the world and experience new things.'

Example 2: 'Move'

Incorrect:

'One of my dreams is to move the world and experience new things.'

This sentence doesn't make sense. You wouldn't say 'move the world' in this context. A better way to word this sentence would be:

Correct:

'One of my dreams is to move to another country and experience new things.'

However, using 'move' in this sentence means you want to live in another country for a **prolonged period of time**, not a holiday.

Example 3: 'Tour'

Correct:

'One of my dreams is to tour the world and experience new things.'

This sentence makes sense and can be used in this sentence instead of 'move'.

Example 4: 'Journey'

Incorrect:

'One of my dreams is to journey the world and experience new things.'

This sentence doesn't make sense. You can't 'journey the world'. A better way of using the synonym 'journey' in a sentence would be:

Correct:

'One of my dreams is to go on a journey around the world and experience new things.'

The list goes on about the right and wrong ways to use synonyms, but often you need to reword a sentence slightly for it to make sense.

If you use a synonym in a sentence and it doesn't make sense, you'll lose marks. So it's really important to understand how they are used.

Secret 3. The best students get high marks because they practice using synonyms

There are different ways to use synonyms, including the implementation of different forms of the word. For example, the words '**significantly**', '**notably**', '**strikingly**', '**markedly**', and '**considerably**' are adverbs. They can also be used in their adjective forms '**significant**', '**notable**', '**striking**', '**marked**', and '**considerable**'.

You should become comfortable using different forms of each of the synonyms, so **you need to practice using them!**

How can you practice using them?

You can use an online thesaurus website such as <https://www.thesaurus.com> to help you find synonyms and then you can use an online sentence correction website like <https://www.grammarly.com> to help you use those words accurately.

Here's an example of how you can write down different word forms into sentences:

Word: **Considerable/Considerably**

*'There was a **considerable** difference in the amount of rain which fell in the summer months compared with the winter months, with an average of 600mm and 150mm, respectively.'*

*'The amount of rain which fell in the summer months compared with the winter months differed **considerably**, with an average of 600mm and 150mm, respectively.'*

Using Complex Structures In The Writing Section

In order to achieve a band 7 or above, you are required to ‘use a variety of complex structures’ which demonstrates a good grammatical range and accuracy, as stated in the writing band descriptors below:

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">fully satisfies all the requirements of the taskclearly presents a fully developed response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attentionskilfully manages paragraphing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as ‘slips’	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as ‘slips’
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">covers all requirements of the task sufficientlypresents, highlights and illustrates key features/bullet points clearly and appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none">sequences information and ideas logicallymanages all aspects of cohesion welluses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meaningsskilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocationproduces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a wide range of structuresthe majority of sentences are error-freemakes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">covers the requirements of the task(Academic) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages(General Training) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriateclearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended	<ul style="list-style-type: none">logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughoutuses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precisionuses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocationmay produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a variety of complex structuresproduces frequent error-free sentenceshas good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors

What is a complex structure?

In simple terms, a complex structure (also known as a complex sentence) is just two or more 'clauses' (parts) put together. A clause is a verb surrounded by some context. We put them together to make sentences.

Many students are confused by the name 'complex sentences' and 'complex structures' because they sound... complex. However, this is a misconception and is just one way to mean 'a sentence with 2 or more clauses (parts)'.

There are two main types of clause and it is really important you understand these because they are one way to form a complex structure.

The 2 main types of clause you need to know:

1. Independent clause - An independent clause makes sense on its own.

It does not depend on any other sentence for it to make sense.

For example:

'I would like to make a complaint about the service I received.'

2. Dependent clause - A dependent clause relies on another sentence for it to make sense. Hence, it needs an independent clause to support it.

For example:

'because the waitress was extremely rude'.

On its own, a **dependent clause** doesn't make any sense. We need more information to be able to understand it. This is where an **independent clause** is needed.

Making a complex sentence using the examples above:

If we put the dependent and independent clauses together, we get a **complex sentence**.

Complex sentence:

*'I would like to make a complaint about the service I received
because the waitress was extremely rude.'*

Other ways to make complex sentences:

You can also make a complex sentence using two or more simple sentences **PLUS** a **linking word**.

Look at the following example of how 2 simple sentences can make a complex sentence:

Simple sentences:

1. *'I am planning a trip to Spain for my birthday.'*
2. *'I would love you to come.'*

The complex sentence:

*'I am planning a trip to Spain for my birthday **and** I would love you to come.'*

Linking word

In this example, '**and**' is used as a linking word.

Seems simple, right?

Let's increase the difficulty by showing you how to make a complex sentence using **THREE** clauses.

Here's an example with 3 clauses:

Clause 1 (independent):

'I would like to make an appointment to see the doctor.'

Clause 2 (dependent)

'it is time for my annual check-up'

Clause 3 (dependent)

'it has actually been much longer than a year since my last one.'

The complex sentence:

*'I would like to make an appointment to see the doctor **because** it is time for my annual check-up, **although** it has actually been much longer than a year since my last one.'*

Linking words

These three clauses are connected with linking words. In this case, the linking words are '**because**' and '**although**'.

Now we know what complex sentences are and how to make them, so now is the time to practice.

Start simple and build on the sentences until they become more complex.

Remember, accuracy is really important so only use complex sentences if you are completely confident.



Remember!

Always start a complex sentence with a simple sentence, then add another simple sentence (with a connecting word) **Or** a dependent clause.

The NUMBER 1 Complex Structure Pitfall

The biggest mistake IELTS students make is trying to use **too many complex sentences** in an attempt to impress the examiner. The keyword in the band descriptor to achieve a band 7 score is 'variety', so you need to demonstrate both complex and simple sentences through your essay!

To score a band 8 or 9, you need to use a '*wide range of structures*' (as shown in the band descriptors table a few pages earlier). This **does not** mean you need to use MORE complex structures/sentences, you simply need to use a **GREATER RANGE** or **DIFFERENT TYPES** of them.

For example, you can demonstrate a great range of complex sentences by using different connecting words (such as 'and', 'but', 'whereas', 'however', 'which'), and using two or three independent and dependent clauses. Have another look at the examples we discussed in the section above.

A word of warning though - another common mistake we see is students writing complex sentences which simply do not make sense. This is frowned upon by the examiner and you risk scoring band 5 or below. Always make sure anything you write makes sense!



Beware!

IF YOU ARE UNSURE IF A COMPLEX SENTENCE MAKES SENSE, DO NOT WRITE IT!!!

The 9 Writing Band 7+ Noun-Verb Agreement Rules

This section is essential for both task 1 and task 2

What is a noun?

We won't go into extensive detail about what a noun is, and all the different types. That is not the purpose of this book. Understanding the complexities and different definitions of nouns will not gain you better marks in the IELTS. After all, most native English speakers do not fully understand nouns in detail. However, you must recognise what a noun is and the correct way to use them.

In simple terms, a noun is a type of word used to identify something.

For example:

A person (man, woman, doctor, teacher, Peter)

An animal (dog, cat, cow, pig)

A place (UK, garden, house)

An object (table, car, house, orange).

What is a verb?

Put simply, a verb is a type of word used to define an action or a state of being.

Verbs form the main part of a sentence and are responsible for the sentence 'making sense'. All sentences should contain a verb, otherwise the reader will not understand what you are trying to say.

There are 2 types of verb; 'action' verbs and 'state of being' verbs. They can be past, present or future tense.

Examples include:

An action (jump, swim, running, playing, looking, thinking, wrote)

A state of being (is, was, were, am, are, will be)

As mentioned above, if a verb is not included in a sentence, the sentence will not make any sense.

Below are examples of sentences with and without verbs, to emphasise this point:

Incorrect: *'They the mountain.'*

Correct: *'They **climbed** the mountain.'*

Incorrect: *'He football all day.'*

Correct: *'He **played** football all day.'*

Incorrect: *'She 30 years old tomorrow.'*

Correct: *'She **is** 30 years old tomorrow.'*

Incorrect: *'I in the shower when you called.'*

Correct: *'I **was** in the shower when you called.'*

The 9 noun-verb agreement rules & how to use them to score Band 7+ in the writing section

Okay, so now you have an idea about what nouns and verbs are, we need to discuss how they work together.

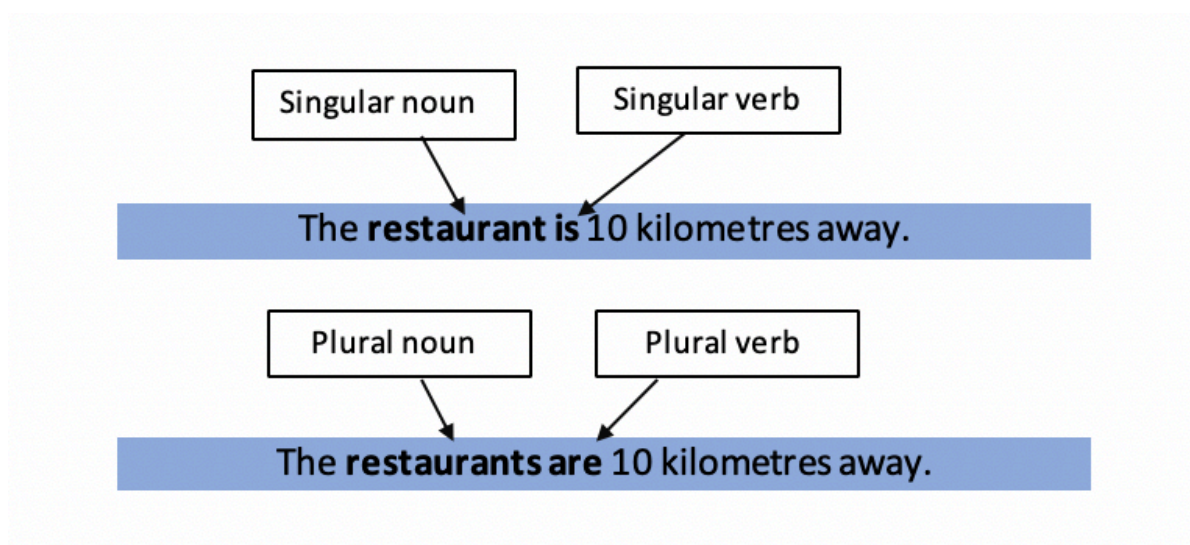
There are certain rules which you must follow when completing the writing tasks so your sentences are grammatically correct. Incorrect use of the noun-verb rules is one of the main ways students fail to score above a band 5 in the writing section.

It can be a little tricky and you may need to read over this part several times, so stay focussed!

Rule 1:

Singular nouns require a singular verb, whereas plural nouns require plural verbs.

Example:



Rule 2:

When using a plural, third person (such as 'they') in the present tense, the verb must NEVER finish with an '-s'.

Examples:**Correct:**

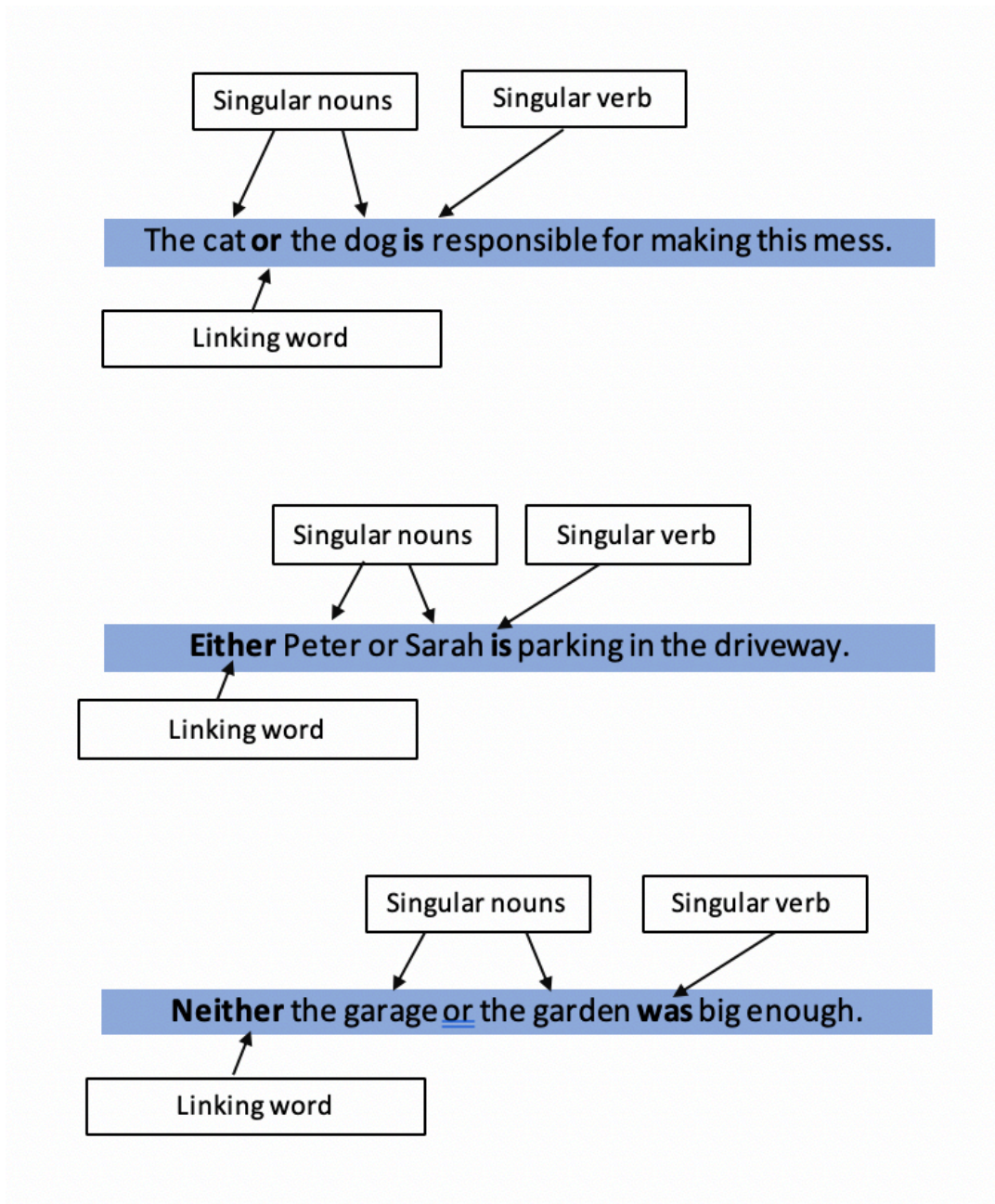
They **believe** electric cars are beneficial.

Incorrect:

They believes electric cars are beneficial.

Rule 3:

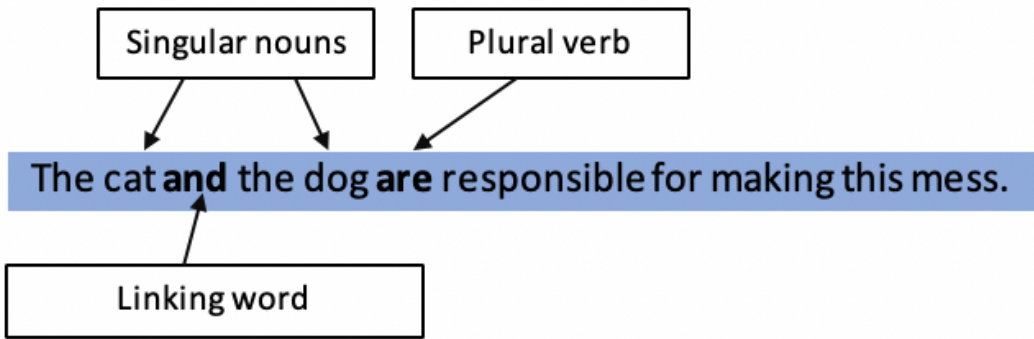
Two singular nouns need a SINGULAR verb (e.g. 'is', 'was') when linked by 'or', 'either' or 'neither'.

Examples:

Rule 4:

****Opposite to rule 3****

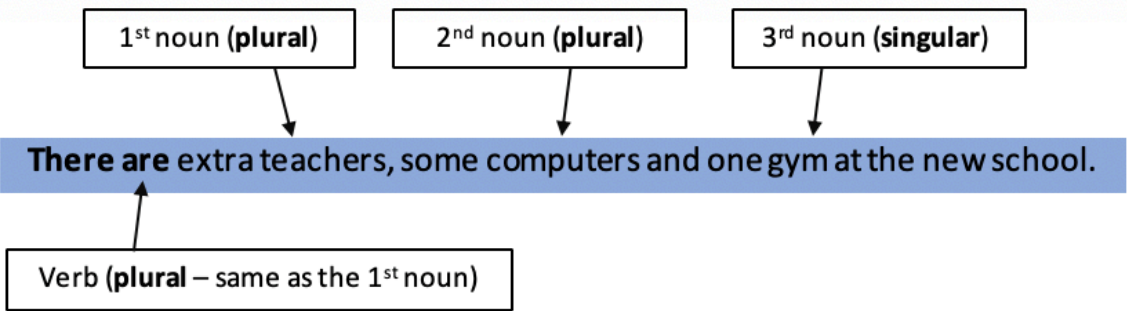
Two singular nouns need a PLURAL verb (e.g. 'are') when linked by 'and'.



Rule 5:

When using multiple nouns, you must match the verb to the first noun (**singular** or **plural**).

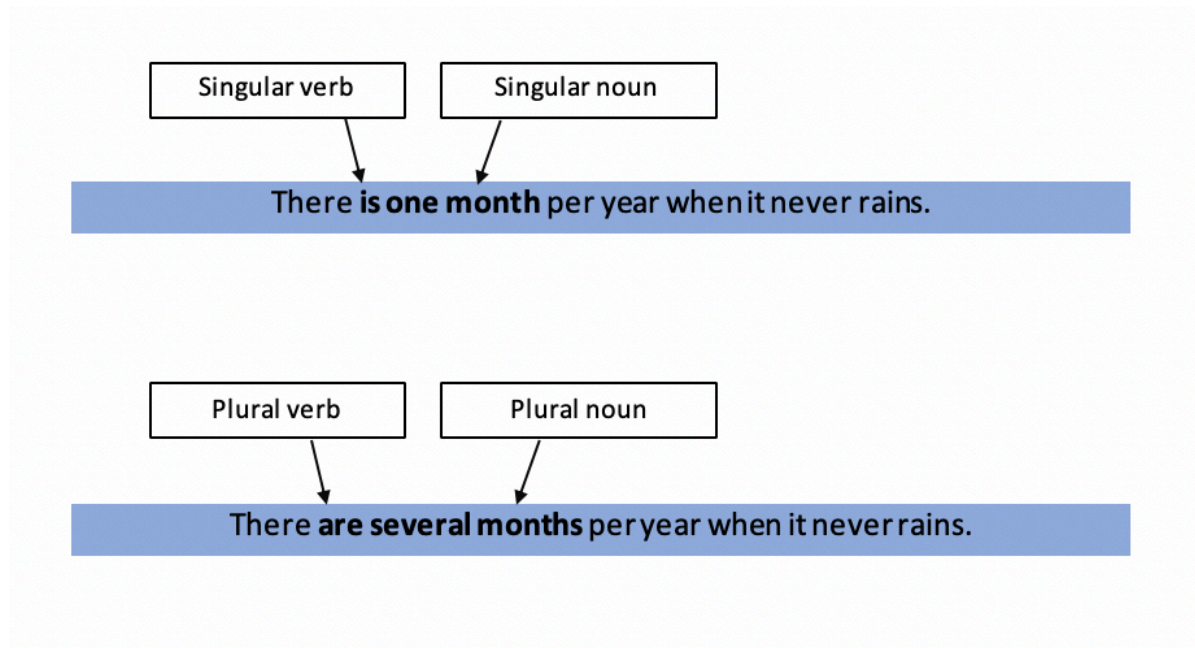
Example:



Rule 6:

When writing 'there is' or 'there are' in a sentence, you must match the noun to the verb, depending if it is singular (e.g. is, was) or plural (e.g. are, were).

Example:

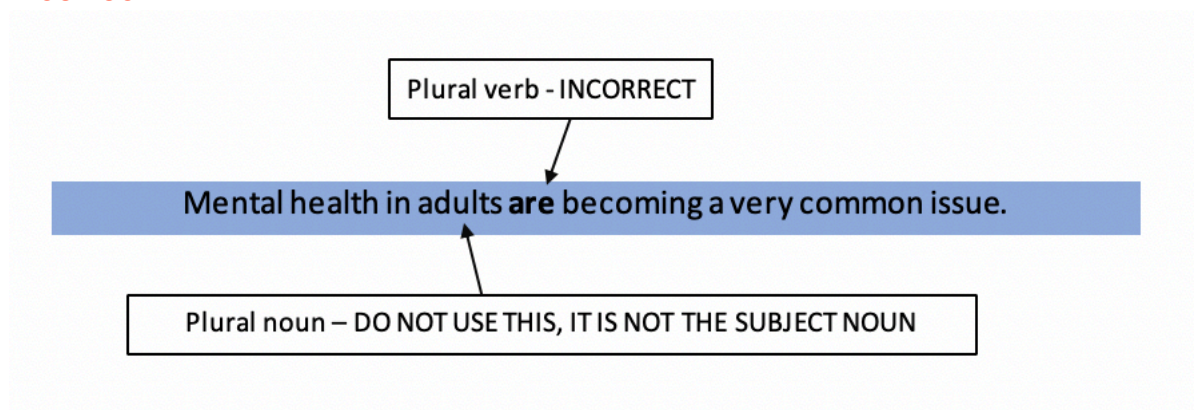


Rule 7:

Make sure you always match the verb to the subject (main focus) of the sentence (and not the last noun) when there is additional information between the subject and verb.

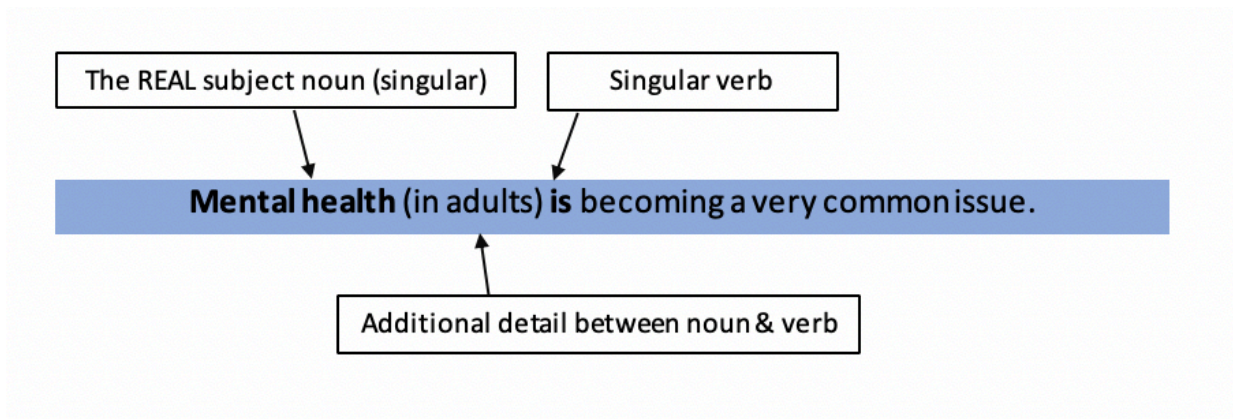
Example:

Incorrect:



This sentence is incorrect because the real SUBJECT of the sentence was not identified properly. The writer has incorrectly chosen to use the plural noun '**adults**' to match the verb '**are**' to (plural). Many students make the same mistake in the IELTS.

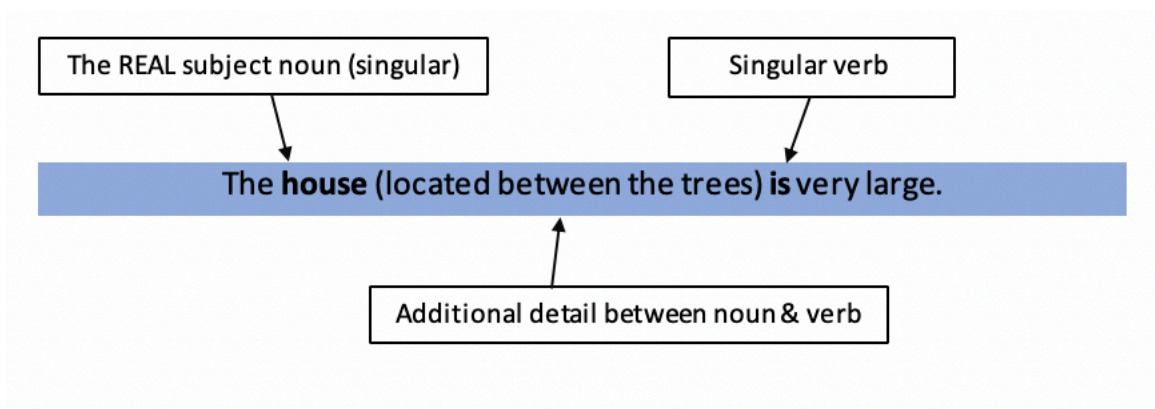
Correct:



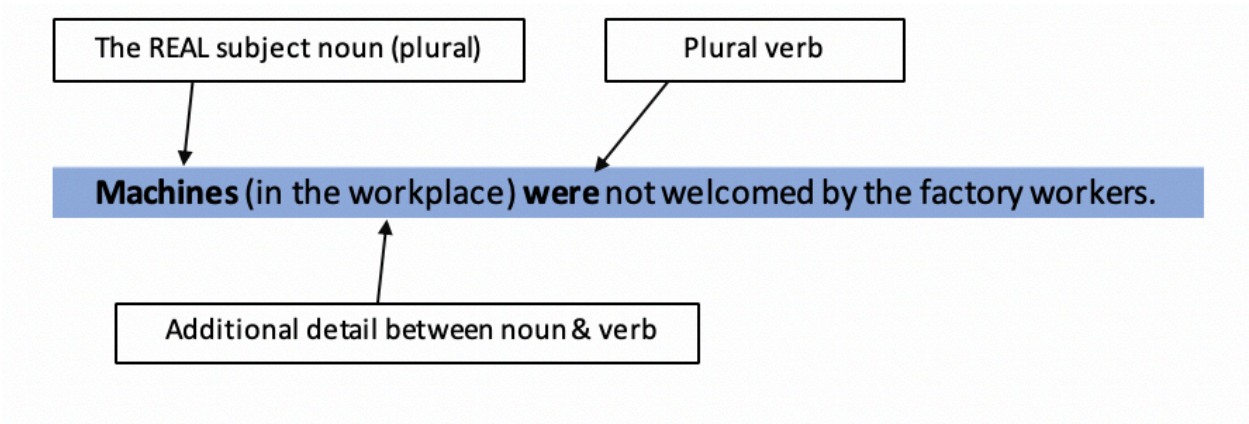
This sentence is correct, because '**Mental health**' is the subject noun and it is singular. 'in adults' is just additional information. Therefore, a singular verb should be used to match it; in this case the correct verb is, '**is**'.

Other CORRECT examples:

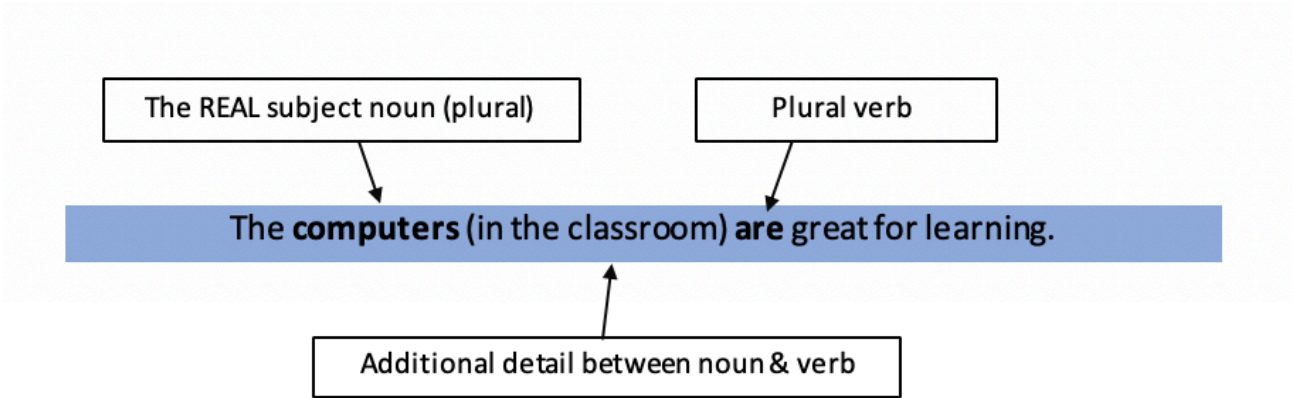
Example 1:



Example 2:



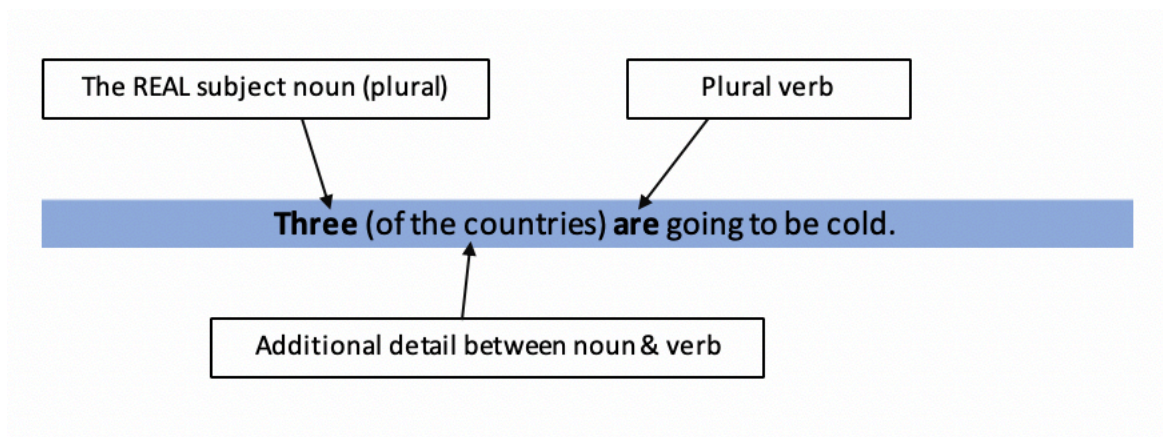
Example 3:



Rule 8:

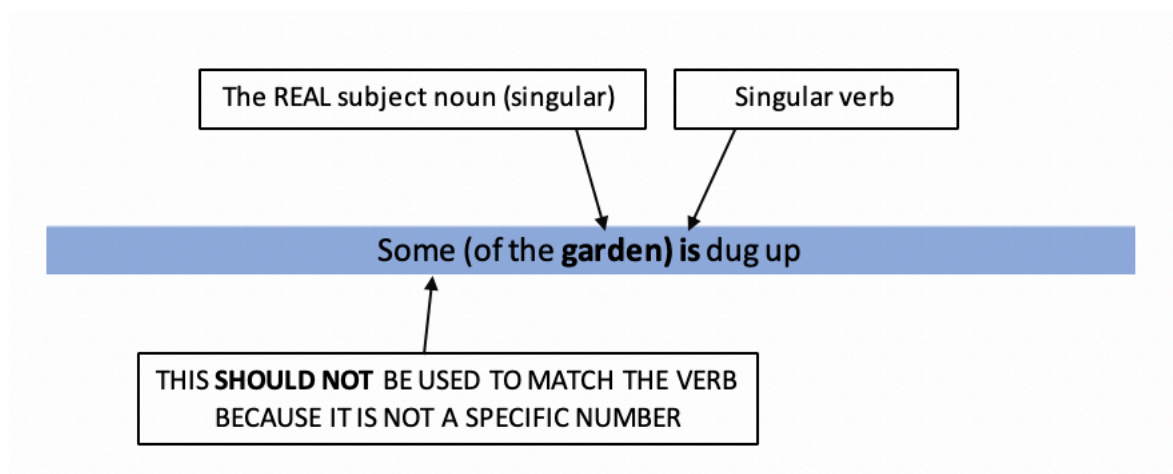
This rule follows on from rule 7. When writing a sentence using a specific number (e.g. **Three** of the countries..., **One** girl...), the **number** is the subject and the verb should agree with it (singular – singular, plural – plural).

Example:



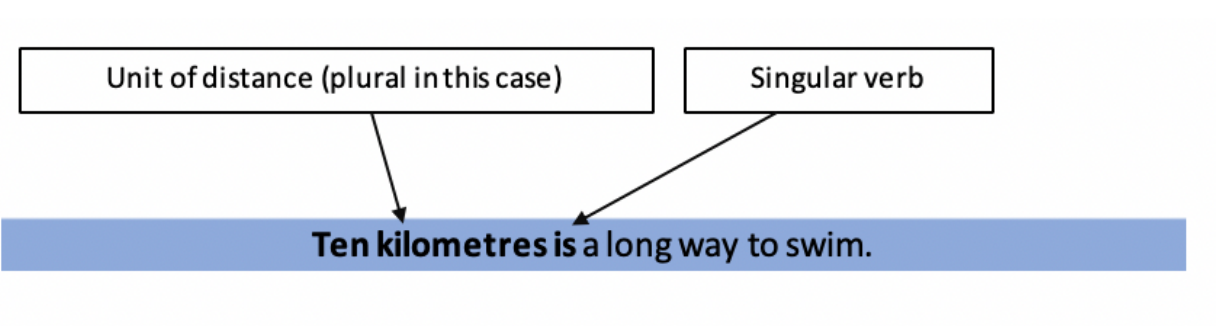
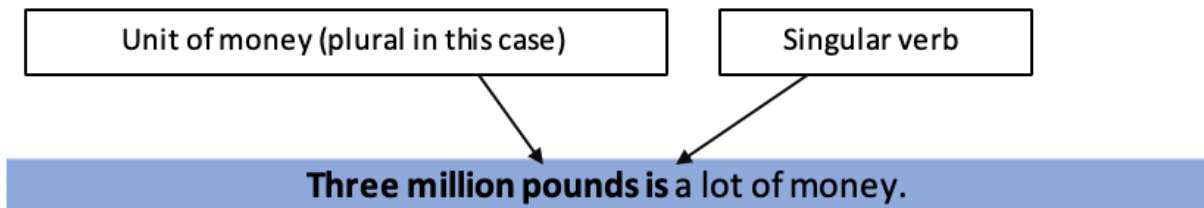
However, if a less specific term is used when describing a number (e.g. A lot of the countries..., Some of the garden...), this should not be used by the verb. Instead, the noun in the next part of the sentence must be used to match the verb (e.g. A lot of the **countries**..., Some of the **garden**...).

Example:



Rule 9:

When discussing units of time, distance, speed, and amount of money etc., use a singular verb even if the unit is plural. Note, this **must be a unit** (a way of measuring something).

Example 1:**Example 2:**

IELTS Excellence TASK 1

'Damage Limitation' Strategy

Hopefully, you will never need to use this strategy, but if you hit a mental mind block, you need to know what you can do to minimise the damage to your **overall** score. In other words, you need to know **the basics**.

Remember, the aim is to score **minimum band 7** in the IELTS, so you need to get an **average** of band 7 in all 4 sections, as a minimum.

'What does this mean?'

I will explain below...

When the IELTS is marked, you will receive a score for each of the 4 sections. These scores will give your **overall** IELTS score. This is simply worked out by adding the 4 section scores together and dividing by 4, to give the average:

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \textbf{Writing} \\ + \\ \textbf{Reading} \\ + \\ \textbf{Listening} \\ + \\ \textbf{Speaking} \end{array} \right) \div 4 = \textbf{Overall Score}$$

What's the minimum required to score IELTS Band 7.0 overall?

The diagram below shows the overall score you would achieve depending on how you score in the 4 sections.

Your overall score will be in an 0.5 increment (e.g. 5.0, 5.5, 6.0, 6.5, 7.0, 7.5, 8.0 and so on).

This means that if your average score is calculated to be a .25 or .75 increment, it will be increased to the nearest 0.5.

For example, a score of 6.25 will be increased to 6.5 and a score of 6.75 will be rounded-up to a score of 7.0.

So in fact, you can actually get an overall band score of 6.75 as this will be officially calculated as a band score of 7!

Here are some diagrams to help explain this concept. There are other variations possible, but this is just some examples:



So, how does the damage limitation strategy work?

In reality, you don't want to score any less than a band 6 in the writing section because you will have to score extremely well (at least a band 8) in one of the other sections to still get an overall score of 7.

Our TASK 1 'damage limitation' strategy is therefore designed for you to get at least band 6 in the task 1 writing section and **IS ONLY RECOMMENDED IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING TO THINK WHAT TO WRITE.**

Firstly, let's look at the official band descriptors to see what the examiner needs to give you a score of band 6 versus band 7:

Band 6

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">addresses the requirements of the task(Academic) presents an overview with information appropriately selected(General Training) presents a purpose that is generally clear; there may be inconsistencies in tonepresents and adequately highlights key features/bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progressionuses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanicalmay not always use referencing clearly or appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the taskattempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracymakes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a mix of simple and complex sentence formsmakes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication
---	---	--	---	---

Band 7

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">covers the requirements of the task(Academic) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages(General Training) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriateclearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended	<ul style="list-style-type: none">logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughoutuses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precisionuses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocationmay produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">uses a variety of complex structuresproduces frequent error-free sentenceshas good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
---	--	--	--	---

What does this mean?

We have simplified the band 6 & 7 requirements for you here:

Band 6	Band 7
Answer ALL question requirements	Answer ALL question requirements
Give a relatively clear purpose of the letter	Give a very clear purpose of the letter
Mostly writes logically with 'flow' between most paragraphs (follows a framework)	Always writes logically with 'flow' between all paragraphs (follows a framework)
Writes in a correct tone and mostly includes details linked to the bullet points (though some errors are allowed).	Writes in a correct tone throughout and always includes details linked to the bullet points.
Use cohesive devices, some inaccuracies allowed	Use cohesive devices accurately
Reasonable range of vocabulary (some inaccuracies allowed)	Good range of vocabulary (accurate and varied words e.g. synonyms)
Mostly simple sentences	A good range of complex sentences
Some grammatical errors , but the letter still makes sense.	Most sentences are error free. Grammatical errors are very rare.

This is what you need to do to prevent scoring below a band 6. **Your priority should always be to aim to achieve band 7 (by using the specific frameworks provided in this book).** However, if you struggle to remember all of our band 7 strategies in the exam, the MINIMUM you must aim for is band 6. You should only use the damage limitation strategy if you completely forget what to do, or don't understand what you are being asked to write a letter about.

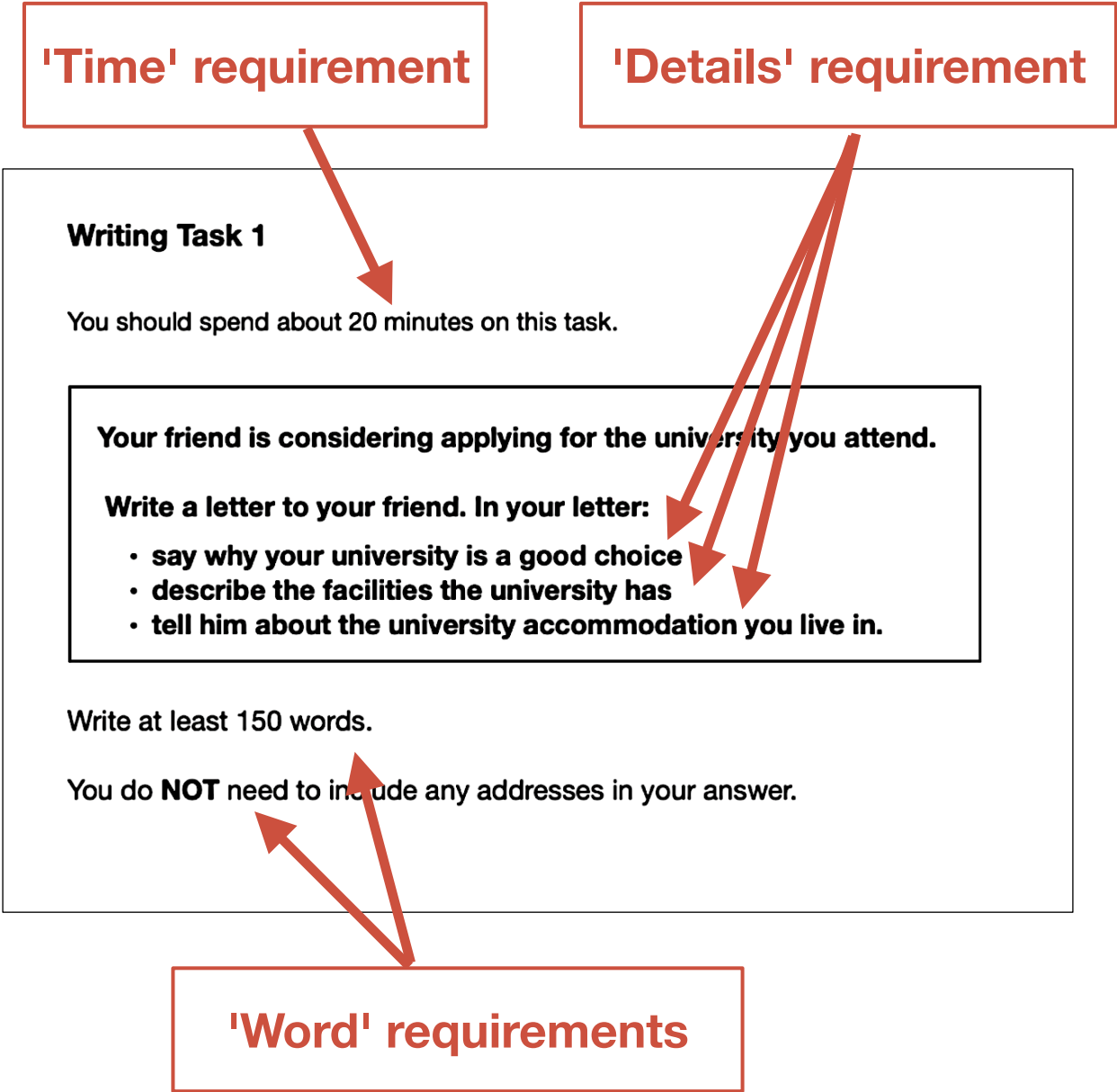
The 8 Step Strategy:

Here's the damage limitation strategy we recommend (based on the band descriptors for achieving band 6).

Step 1. Focus on the essential requirements

As you can see in the band 6 descriptors, you must **'Address the requirements of the question'**. In other words, if you fail to complete the requirements, you will fail to score band 6 or above.

Here are the essential question requirements:



As you can see, the essential requirements are split into 3 parts; a time requirement, the letter detail requirements and requirements related to the word count and specific instructions about content.

You must meet all of these requirements in your answer to stand a chance of achieving band 6 or above.

Step 2. State the purpose of your letter

One of the essential steps in achieving minimum band 6 is by stating why you are writing the letter (i.e the purpose of the letter): ***'Presents a clear purpose that is generally clear'***.

We advise doing this in the Pleasantry Paragraph (personal letter) or Letter Purpose Paragraph (formal letter).

When stating the purpose of your letter, you can make it very obvious (often used in a formal letter, such as ***'I am writing this letter to you because...'***) or quite subtle (often used in a personal letter, such as ***'I heard about you accepting a new job, so I thought I'd drop you a line to say congratulations!'***).

Go back to the Letter Writing Frameworks section of this book to remind yourself about stating the purpose of the letter.

Step 3. Identify and write about the 3 bullet points in the question.

Another necessity is to identify and write about the 3 bullet points in the question. The band 6 descriptor states ***'Presents & adequately highlights key features/ bullet points'***. Now, to score band 6, you don't actually have to answer them perfectly. You just have to: 1) Identify the key details, and 2) Write about the key details.

Obviously, you should include them in 3 separate paragraphs (1 for each bullet point), each with 2-3 sentences.

Step 4. Write in separate paragraphs

This is a simple way to fulfil the band 6 descriptor requirement of '**Arranges information and ideas coherently and there is clear overall progression.**'

Go back and have a look at the frameworks - you must correctly open your letter, discuss the bullet points and close your letter to achieve at least a band 6.

Step 5. Use some cohesive devices (connecting words), such as 'and', 'also', 'too', 'but', 'however' and 'although'.

You **don't have to go overboard with these**, just make sure you use **some** of them.

Step 6. Include a few less common words

By 'less common' we simply mean words that you may not hear often in everyday language. There is an endless list of words which you could use, but these may depend on the topic of the question.

For example, if you look at the question about a friend applying for university in STEP 1 above, you could include words related to studying/university such as 'lecturer', 'academic', 'scholar', 'educational', 'competent', 'excellent', 'admirable'...and so on.

***** WARNING *****

DO NOT include complex words if you do not know what they mean!!!

This is one reason why we have discussed the most common types of letters you will be asked to write and given several excellent examples in our **exclusive** Band 7+ '[General Writing Practice Questions & Model Answers Workbook](#)', so you can build a list of less common words and broaden your vocabulary in these topics.

Step 7. Use at least 2 complex sentences.

You must use at least two, but preferably around 5-7, complex sentences to score at least band 6 for grammar. **If you fail to use a complex sentence, you will not get a band 6 score for this part.**

What is a complex sentence?

A complex sentence does not mean that the sentence has to be long or complicated. It simply means it must contain 2 parts; one which makes sense on its own (independent), and the other which relies on the first part to make sense (dependent).

Here is a basic example of how two simple sentences are put together to form a complex sentence:

Simple sentences:

'I would like to book an appointment.'

'I have a pain in my stomach.'

Complex sentence:

'I would like to book an appointment because I have a pain in my stomach.'

For more information, go to the complex sentence section of this book.

Step 8. Make sense!

This is arguably one of the most important steps. Your answer must make sense! Let me say that again.

**** YOUR ANSWER MUST MAKE SENSE ****

~~Examiner read cannot band 6 score, no sense.~~ If the examiner cannot read your answer, you will fail to score band 6. It's as simple as that.

So, whatever you write, be confident that it actually makes sense. **If you are unsure, don't write it.** Write something else (that you are confident about).

4 Key Mindset Techniques To Ensure IELTS Success

For the majority of people, preparing for the IELTS exam means regular, consistent studying for long hours and often for many months. It is always easier to avoid studying and planning to start from 'tomorrow'. But if you think *"When should I begin preparing or studying for the IELTS exam"* – the answer is right NOW!

There are key 4 mindset techniques which help students succeed in the IELTS exam. These are:

- Body & Mind Preparation
- Meditation
- Regular Self-Affirmation
- Visualisation

If you want to develop a positive mindset, it is important to put these 4 techniques into practice.

Here's how...

1. Body & Mind Preparation

You need to ensure that your body and mind are in the best possible state for studying. You should prepare your body early in the day for at least 2-3 months prior to your IELTS examination.

5 things you can do straight after you wake up each morning:

- Splash some COLD water on your face
- Brush and floss teeth
- Have a glass of water
- Stretch to increase blood flow and loosen muscles
- Have a low GI breakfast (e.g. porridge, eggs)

2. Meditation – 3-5 Minutes Per Day

Meditation helps in reducing stress levels and preparing for studying. It is often done by athletes before an important event.

Meditation helps you to start your day with clarity, calmness and peace of mind. It will help keep you focussed on what's important in your life, your priorities and goals. For you, this will include passing the IELTS exam.

Here's how:

Find a comfortable and quiet place to sit...

Sit in an upright position on the floor. Your back should be tall and straight...

Your legs should be crossed and your eyes closed...

Slowly, start to focus on your breathing. You need to breathe in slowly and deeply through the nose for 3 seconds...

Then breathe out slowly through the mouth. This should take 3 seconds.

Repeat.

... In through the nose and out through the mouth.

Visualise the air flowing into and out of your chest - follow the air as you breathe in and out.

As you do this, you will feel all your emotions and thoughts slowly settling down.

You should repeat this exercise for 3-5 minutes each day.

The main purpose of meditation is to clear your mind and reduce anxiety. It also enables you to complete tasks more efficiently. It is a VERY important step of developing a positive mindset.

3. Regular Self-Affirmation – 3 Minutes Per Day

Self-Affirmation: *'the recognition and assertion of the existence and value of one's individual self.'*

Mohammad Ali, one of the best sportsmen in world history said that it is the repetition of self-affirmation which brings the most success.

Self-affirmation is the process of telling yourself that you will achieve anything you wish.

Daily self-affirmation allows your goals and dreams to become part of your subconscious mind. This is part of the mind which does not require conscious thought; it is a passive process.

Regular affirmations transform the way you think and feel and help to overcome all uncertainties or concerns. Your new beliefs will replace any negative thoughts and will help you succeed in the IELTS.

You can create your own affirmations or you can use the ones provided below.

Here are some affirmations which are used by many successful band 7+ students:

'I am going to put 110% effort into my studies every day until I am ready to smash the IELTS.'

'I will practice writing essays until I am the most competent out of all my friends.'

'I will take on board constructive feedback which will help me to improve my skills.'

'I will read all sections of this book until I am confident with all of them.'

'I will learn all the necessary IELTS content.'

'I will ace the IELTS.'

'I will regularly practice all questions until I am confident with them, no matter how much time it takes.'

'I will make all my friends and family proud.'

'I will succeed.'

'I have what it takes to score band 7, 8 or 9.'

'I will regularly put in hard work.'

'I will score high in the IELTS exam and live my dream life.'

'I will happily make any sacrifice needed so that I get the band score I require.'

'I am going to work hard and improve all my weak points and eventually I will succeed.'

'I will get a high IELTS score. I am not worried how long it takes me.'

'I will definitely achieve my dream. Nothing can stop me.'

You should say these affirmations out loud, whilst looking at yourself in front of a mirror. It is most effective if you do this for around 3 minutes per day while studying for the IELTS.

4. Visualisation – 3 Minutes Per Day:

Visualisation is the technique which involves a practice of generating positive results.

It is done with the help of your imagination, and helps to create mental images of what your life will be like after the IELTS.

It is all about imagining all that you **wish to achieve**. It is about mentally rehearsing what you will do to accomplish your dreams.

Here's the technique we recommend:

Spend around three minutes listening to relaxing music.

Sit upright in a comfortable position. Make yourself feel really relaxed.

Close your eyes.

Take a deep breath, just like you would for meditation (in and out as you hold for 3 seconds).

Visualise that you are preparing for the IELTS exam and studying hard each day. Success is your priority.

Now imagine that you are sat in the IELTS exam, and you know exactly what to do. You have worked hard and know you have prepared extremely well.

Visualise yourself calmly answering all questions of the exam. You answer task 1 easily and write the task 2 essay perfectly. Your handwriting is beautiful. You finish with 2 minutes to spare. You know you have impressed the examiner.

Now visualise yourself checking your IELTS results. You achieve a band 7 score. Everything you have ever dreamed of is becoming a reality. You are able to attend that prestigious university, or move country and live a perfect life. You are the most successful member of your family and all your friends look up to you.

Think about your dream life. Where you would prefer to live. How will you spend your days? Will you have a happy family? Will you become one of the influential academics in world? How your parents will react after you succeed? Lastly, how you will feel when you look back at all your efforts and the hard work you put in to achieve your dream?

Visualisation is the process of showing you what you can achieve if you work hard enough. It is not fantasy. It is all there waiting for you.

Developing A Winning Mindset

Master your mind and you will master the IELTS.

For the majority of people, preparing for the IELTS exam means regular, consistent studying for many hours and often for many months. It is human nature to try and avoid doing something we don't enjoy, such as revising. Nobody likes studying for an exam, we understand.

Students often think 'I'll start tomorrow'. The problem is, tomorrow never comes. So if you are asking yourself "When should I begin preparing or studying for the IELTS exam", the answer is right NOW!

We often get asked, "How do I start preparing?" We think you need to start with preparing your mind.

Developing a positive mindset is one of the most important things you can do and there are many different ways to do this. Some of the most common methods of staying positive include studying early in the day, meditating, regular affirmations and visualising your dreams (like we discussed above).

Law of attraction

Ever heard of the 'law of attraction'? This natural phenomenon says that if you truly believe in your mind that you are going to achieve something, you will actually go on to achieve it. On the contrary, if you think you are going to fail, this will also be true. This is how sports psychologists help sports stars win.

To get a little sciency, there is a proven 'positive feedback loop' between a positive mindset, your motivation, performance and the results you achieve. It all starts with developing your mindset. See below for an illustration:



So, in summary, developing a positive mindset is one of the best advantages you can give yourself!

There are many Youtube videos about this law and it would be sensible for you to check them out. Tony Robbins is one of the most influential people on this topic - check him out.

Practice Questions and Model Answers

Practice Question 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You have received complimentary tickets to a theatre production and would like to invite your friend.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter include:

- **Details of the production**
- **The reason you chose to invite them**
- **Your travel arrangements to the venue**

Write at least 150 words.

A model answer for this question is given on the next page. However, we strongly advise that you attempt **writing your own answer first**, before moving on.

Model Answer

Dear Heather,

I hope you are well. I have been given free tickets to a show next Thursday and would be over the moon if you could come with me.

The Chester Amateur Dramatic Society is presenting their own version of Aladdin, and it sounds like it's going to be a great show. They have hired the village hall in Wellington for the production, which is a small venue so be prepared for some audience participation.

I know that Aladdin is one of your favourite films, so you were the first person I thought of when I received the tickets. Also, I have heard on the grapevine that Brad Pitt may be making a cameo appearance, which would be incredible.

I will be driving to the show so I will pick you up from your house at 6.30pm on Thursday and we can park in the village hall car park.

I really hope you can come along as it will be a great evening!

Best wishes,

Muriel

Practice Question 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You would like to apply for a government funded research project run by your local council.

Write a letter to the local council research team. In your letter include:

- **The reasons why you would like to apply**
- **Why you are suitable for the project**
- **What research you would like to undertake**

Write at least 150 words.

Begin your letter as follows:

'Dear...'

A model answer for this question is given on the next page. However, we strongly advise that you attempt **writing your own answer first**, before moving on.

Model Answer

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to apply for the Sunnyside Council's recycling research project and would love the opportunity to join the team in this imperative study.

I recently graduated from Sunnyside University with a degree in Environmental Health and have a passion for protecting our planet and community. During my university studies, I discovered that we are not educating people enough about the benefits of recycling and this has fuelled my desire to change this.

The main attribute I would bring to the project would be my determination to succeed as I am passionate about saving the environment through increased recycling. I also have extensive experience of conducting environmental questionnaires with the general public, which is a crucial skill to ensure the research project is successful.

I would like to undertake community-based research, which would include speaking to local residents about their recycling habits and then developing an educational program based on their responses.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding my application.

Yours faithfully,

Billy Green

The Power Of Using Practice Questions

Studying example questions and seeing actual band 7, 8 or 9 model answers is a very powerful way to give yourself an advantage in the IELTS.

Why is this?

Over 90% of successful students spend a lot of time analysing practice questions & model answers because it is one of the best ways to learn exactly what an examiner wants to see. It puts all of the theory you learn into practice.

Think about it...

If you don't actually SEE what a band 7, 8 or 9 answer to a specific question looks like, how are you meant to know how to achieve a high score in the question yourself?

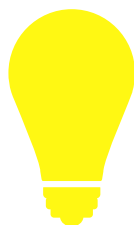
That's why students who utilise practice questions & model answers effectively usually pass the IELTS with band 7+ first time and go on to live their dream life, without having to retake the test or give up completely.

What can YOU do now to be one of those successful students?

At the request of thousands of worldwide IELTS students, we have compiled exclusive eBooks cram-packed full of Writing Task 1 & Task 2 questions along with model answers. In addition, all model answers are guaranteed to be of band 7, 8 or 9 quality.

So, if you want to ace the IELTS, we strongly advise that you invest in our [IELTS Writing Questions & Band 7+ Model Answers Workbook](#). It has been developed alongside official IELTS examiners, so you can be assured the information is of excellent quality and you will be on your way to Band 7+ in no time!

Furthermore, the questions are typical of what you would find in the IELTS writing section and they are based around the most common types of letters found in the exam. You really shouldn't miss out if you want to give yourself the best chance of success.



Tip!

Check out our '[Ultimate General Practice Questions & Model Answers eBook](#)'.

It contains dozens of Task 1 & Task 2 practice questions with model answers!

Final Word

Congratulations! You have made it to the end of the book. You should be extremely proud of yourself for getting this far.

There is no doubt that preparing for the IELTS is challenging and difficult. You are not alone. Everybody who takes the test finds it daunting, native English speaker included. After all, your future life depends on you achieving a great band score.

We hope this book has helped you understand everything required to achieve band 7+ in the General Writing Task 1 section of the IELTS.

One of the main things to remember is that you need to put a lot of hard work into your preparation, but it will pay off.

If you need help with any other part of your IELTS preparation, we would love to be involved. Our aim is for you to achieve your dream and not let the IELTS get in the way.

There is a range of other IELTS-beating eBooks available for you. Just head over to www.ielts-excellence.com/premium to see the full range.

In the meantime, would you be able to do us a massive favour? When you get the band 7+ score in the IELTS, please let us know!

All the best for your successful journey!

Sam, Sarah & the IELTS Excellence team

