

Four Things Every IELTS Candidate Should Know

As an IELTS teacher I have seen hundreds of students struggle with ways to improve their IELTS scores. I have seen them study for months and months, take test after test and I have seen many students give up.

Many IELTS candidates give up and become frustrated because they don't know what to do to prepare and don't know what to expect in the exam. Here are four things every IELTS candidate should know before taking the test.

1. Doing Well In The IELTS Exam Takes Time

A very common mistake that almost every IELTS candidate makes is thinking that they can prepare for the IELTS exam in a week or so.

Teacher, can you help me? I haven't studied English for a while and I am taking the IELTS exam on Saturday. How can I prepare?

If the IELTS exam could be prepared for in a week or two it would be quite easy. IT IS NOT EASY. The exam is an international test with very high and strict standards. You need to prepare well in advance to do well on the exam.

As a guide I would suggest 3 months of intensive study to improve one band score. By intensive study I mean 2 hours a day every day for three months.

2. Every IELTS Candidate Learns Differently What Works For You?

It is good to try different learning techniques but don't try everything. Find ideas and strategies that help you learn things well then stick to them. The first step in this process is to decide how you learn best.

A visual learner: You need to see things being done or see written words to remember them. Most people learn in this way but some are more visual than others.

An auditory learner: Listening to new words is enough for you to learn and remember them. If you find listening to new vocabulary or remembering songs lyrics easy, then perhaps you are this type of learner.

A kinaesthetic learner: You need to physically interact and move your body to learn things well. Repeat actions and habits make learning easy for you. Perhaps you like making things, cooking or dancing because the movement makes it easy to learn.

Once you have decided what type of learner you are, spend most of your time, but not all, doing activities that are good for your learning style. If you are a visual learner, read and listen at the same time so you can see the words as well as hear them.

Physical learners could act out a conversation instead of just reading it or listening to it. Audio learners can read out loud so they can hear themselves to reinforce what they are reading.

For information about discovering what type of learner you are visit: [The LEO Network – What kind of learner are you?](#)

3. Take IELTS Preparation Seriously

IELTS is not something you can prepare for without much thought or planning. If you are serious about doing well on the IELTS exam you need to be serious in how you study for the test.

Successful IELTS candidates put time and effort into their IELTS preparation. Spend some time creating a study plan for your next few months of study. Be sure to include a wide variety of tasks covering all of the skills that will be tested.

In a way, you are creating your own English class that will help you do what is needed to get the result you require. Your study plan should include a strict timetable that you follow as well as progress tests and self assessment of your progress.

4. Monitor Your Progress And Reward Yourself

Just about every IELTS candidate I meet becomes stressed or upset because they think their English is not improving. Often the problem is that students are not checking how much their English has improved so they can't see the progress they have made.

You should give yourself regular tests and quizzes so that you can measure improvements in the different ways you use English. Don't just test grammar and meanings of words. Try writing down the answers to these questions and looking at them every 2 weeks.

How long does it take you to complete an IELTS writing task 1?

How many conversations have you had in English this week?

What articles have you read and understood lately?

Can you complete a reading task in 20 minutes and still score well?

These types of questions are a good way to remind yourself how your English is improving. They are also a good tool to motivate yourself to do more the following week or month. Try to get better week by week or month by month.

By measuring and recording your results, it will be easier for you to see how much you have improved in one month, one year or even longer.