

IELTS Writing Key Assessment Criteria

Both the Academic and General Training Writing Modules consist of two tasks, Task 1 and Task 2. Each task is assessed independently. The assessment of Task 2 carries more weight in marking than Task 1. The key criteria for Task 1 and Task 2 are as follows:

For Task 1 of both the AC and GT Writing tests, the key criteria are:

- Task Achievement
- Coherence and Cohesion
- Lexical Resource
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy

For Task 2 of both the AC and GT Writing tests, the key criteria are:

- Task Response
- Coherence and Cohesion
- Lexical Resource
- Grammatical Range and Accuracy

Candidates should note that scripts may be penalised if they are a) partly or wholly plagiarised, b) not written as full, connected text (e.g. using bullet points in any part of the response, or note form, is not appropriate, etc.).

Task 1

TASK ACHIEVEMENT (TA)

For Task 1 of both AC and GT Writing tests, this criterion assesses how fully, appropriately, accurately and relevantly the response fulfils the requirements set out in the task, using a minimum of 150 words.

Academic Writing Task 1

This Writing task has a defined input and a largely predictable output. It is basically an information-transfer task, which relates narrowly to the factual content of a diagram, graph, table, chart, map or other visual input, not to speculative explanations that lie outside the given data.

The TA criterion assesses the ability to summarise the information provided in the diagram by:

- selecting key features of the information.
- providing sufficient detail to illustrate these features.
- reporting the information, figures and trends accurately.
- comparing or contrasting the information by adequately highlighting the identifiable trends, principal changes or differences in the data and other inputs (rather than mechanical description reporting detail).
- presenting the response in an appropriate format.

General Training Writing Task 1

This Writing task also has a largely predictable output in that each task sets out the context and purpose of the letter and the functions the candidate should cover in order to achieve this purpose.

The TA criterion assesses the ability to:

- clearly explain the purpose of the letter.
- fully address the three bullet-pointed requirements set out in the task.
- extend these three functions appropriately and relevantly.
- use an appropriate format for the letter.
- consistently use a tone appropriate to the task.

Task 2

TASK RESPONSE (TR)

For Task 2 of both AC and GT Writing tests, candidates are required to formulate and develop a position in relation to a given prompt in the form of a question or statement, using a minimum of 250 words. Ideas should be supported by evidence, and examples may be drawn from a candidate's own experience.

The TR criterion assesses:

- how fully the candidate responds to the task.
- how adequately the main ideas are extended and supported.
- how relevant the candidate's ideas are to the task.
- how clearly the candidate opens the discourse, establishes their position and formulates conclusions.
- how appropriate the format of the response is to the task.

Task 1 and Task 2

COHERENCE AND COHESION (CC)

This criterion is concerned with the overall organisation and logical development of the message: how the response organises and links information, ideas and language.

Coherence refers to the linking of ideas through logical sequencing, while cohesion refers to the varied and appropriate use of cohesive devices (e.g. logical connectors, conjunctions and pronouns) to assist in making clear the relationships between and within sentences.

The CC criterion assesses:

- the coherence of the response via the logical organisation of information and/or ideas, or the logical progression of the argument.
- the appropriate use of paragraphing for topic organisation and presentation.
- the logical sequencing of ideas and/or information within and across paragraphs.
- the flexible use of reference and substitution (e.g. definite articles, pronouns).
- the appropriate use of discourse markers to clearly mark the stages in a response, e.g. [*First of all* | *In conclusion*], and to signal the relationship between ideas and/or information, e.g. [*as a result* | *similarly*].

LEXICAL RESOURCE (LR)

This criterion refers to the range of vocabulary the candidate has used and the accuracy and appropriacy of that use in terms of the specific task.

The LR criterion assesses:

- the range of general words used (e.g. the use of synonyms to avoid repetition).
- the adequacy and appropriacy of the vocabulary (e.g. topic-specific items, indicators of writer's attitude).
- the precision of word choice and expression.
- the control and use of collocations, idiomatic expressions and sophisticated phrasing.
- the density and communicative effect of errors in spelling.
- the density and communicative effect of errors in word formation.
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GRAMMATICAL RANGE AND ACCURACY (GRA)

This criterion refers to the range and accurate use of the candidate's grammatical resource via the candidate's writing at sentence level.

The GRA criterion assesses:

- the range and appropriacy of structures used in a given response (e.g. simple, compound and complex sentences).
- the accuracy of simple, compound and complex sentences.
- the density and communicative effect of grammatical errors.
- the accurate and appropriate use of punctuation.