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Task 1:

Letter Writing

Preview Only

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About the author

I have been teaching English as a second language for over fifteen years in Taiwan and Australia, in language centres and universities. I have also been working as an IELTS examiner. My area of specialization is teaching students how to pass the IELTS exam. I particularly enjoy teaching IELTS because I find it challenging to teach students the necessary skills and strategies that they need to pass, and I also find that my students are highly motivated – this is a joy for a teacher!

Other books in this series

IELTS Writing Task 2

IELTS Task 1 Writing Academic Test

Acknowledgements

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1. Overview

Writing Task 1 of the IELTS general exam is designed to test your ability to write a letter. You must present the information in your own words as complete sentences within paragraphs using a letter format. You are required to write over 150 words, and the task should be completed in about 20 minutes (both part 1 and 2 must be finished in 1 hour).

How to improve your letter writing

1. Learn how to structure different types of letter
2. learn vocabulary for different types of letters
3. Learn skills to improve your answers
4. Practice these skills
5. Do lots of practice tests. Have your letters checked here:
<http://ieltsanswers.com/IELTS-Writing-Correction.html>
6. Receive feedback on practice tests
7. Use the feedback to improve your answers

2. Grading criteria

Criteria	Requirement
Task Achievement [Task Response]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ write over 150 words✓ respond to each bullet point✓ use an appropriate tone and level of politeness
Coherence and Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ sequence information and ideas logically✓ use paragraphing appropriately✓ use a range of cohesive devices appropriately✓ avoid unnecessary repetition of information
Lexical Resource [Vocabulary]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ use of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision✓ use less common lexical items✓ awareness of style and collocation✓ avoid errors with word formation✓ avoid errors with spelling✓ avoid errors with word choices
Grammatical Range and Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms✓ produce error-free sentences✓ avoid errors with grammar and punctuation

Pages 5-10
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in this preview

3. Formality of letters

Certain styles of letters are required for certain occasions. When deciding what style of letter to write, consider the **audience** of the letter, and the **purpose** of the letter. Turning first to the audience in the exam you will have to write a letter to a business, acquaintance, or friend or family member.

Formal letters

The body of a letter written to a business or a person you don't know well is written in formal language, unlike the more casual and friendly language of a letter to a friend or family member.

Semi-formal letters

These letters are to acquaintances, friends or family and so the tone should be friendlier than with a letter to a business. An appropriate tone is an important element of task achievement.

Informal letters

I suggest you do not write this type of letter in the IELTS exam. These are letters written to very close friends and have features such as slang and abbreviations of words. You should NEVER use overly informal language or texting language such as *wanna*, *cos*, and *LOL*. Using the right tone influences the TASK score for your letter.

The reason why I suggest you do not write this way is because it may lower your score for task achievement as it is easy for the tone to be inappropriate. In addition, it may decrease your score for vocabulary because many features of informal writing use unsophisticated language. It's always better to be too formal than not formal enough!

Purposes of letters

It's very important than when you get your task you work out the purpose of the letter you need to write. You need to focus on this purpose throughout the letter in order to score well for task achievement. You can make the purpose of the letter clear by stating it in the introduction. For the IELTS exam you need to be able to write the following types of letters:

Requesting information

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to ask for information from a business or acquaintance.

Giving information

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to respond to a request for information.

Making a complaint

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to complain about a product or situation.

Making an apology

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to apologise for making a mistake or disturbing someone.

Thanking someone

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to thank someone for his or her thoughtfulness or kindness.

4. Requesting information

This type of letter requires you to write a letter to ask for information from a business or acquaintance. When you are asked to make a request for information the most important thing is to use a polite tone. If you do not use an appropriate tone your score for task achievement will be lowered.

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You are planning to spend a weekend at a hotel with your family. Write a letter to the hotel making the arrangements. Ask them the following:

- when you want to arrive and leave
- what type of rooms you would like and ask how much they will cost
- you are interested to know about activities and places of interest near the hotel

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear

Tip!

Before you start writing, make sure you are very clear about the type of letter you need to write.

Useful language for requesting information

To begin letters:

I am writing to ask if you would be so generous as to ...

I am writing to request your kind permission for ...

I wonder if I might ask you for your valuable advice concerning ...

Phrases to make requests:

Could you also provide details of...

I would also like to know...

In addition, could you tell me...

To end letters:

I hope that my request will not inconvenience you too much.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Tip!

When you request information it is better to be over-polite than not polite enough.

Sample letter of request

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to ask if you would be so kind as to give me some details about your hotel's accommodation.

I would like to book accommodation for my family and I from the 11th of March until the 15th. On the 11th I would like to arrive late in the afternoon, and on the 15th, if possible, I would like to have a late check-out at about 4pm.

As we are two adults and a child, I would like to book a one-bedroom suite, if possible. I would also prefer a non-smoking room as my daughter has allergies. Please, let me know how much it would be for the entire length of our stay and also whether the price includes anything extra like breakfast.

I would also appreciate any information you can offer about places for sightseeing and leisure activities as we will be spending a few days in the town nearby.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

Mike Wattie

End of preview

Note: the offer below is only available with a purchase of the book.

SPECIAL OFFER

Thank you for purchasing my book and taking the time to read it. I hope that it will be beneficial and help you to achieve the score you need in the IELTS writing exam.

As a sign of appreciation I would like to offer you a free letter correction using my editing and correction services. In order to take advantage of this offer, please send me an e-mail of your letter and the invoice number for purchasing this book. My e-mail address is: mike@IELTSanswers.com

I believe it is extremely beneficial to have an experienced person read your essays and give you feedback on how to improve them. This can avoid many of the typical errors that occur on test day and help you to maximise your score.