



IELTS tips with gaps which are useful language for the exam

Fill each gap below with one word, thinking about what it must be to fit grammatically and make an accurate statement about the exam.

General tips for Writing

- You should use your eraser as _____ as possible.
- Even someone getting a 9.0 will make a _____ number of grammatical mistakes.
- Being ambitious can _____ up for making basic errors, but the most important thing is being comprehensible.
- IELTS Writing is _____ less academic than journal papers and university theses, for example because you are encouraged to mention _____ experience and it is impossible to make reference to quotations. It is more _____ to a school essay than to a real academic paper.
- Don't waste time counting individual words – count the words on two lines, then calculate a number of words per line. _____ that, count the number of lines and work out the total number of words. Alternatively, it is even better do all your writing on official IELTS paper so you know how many words per line you usually have.

Writing Part One

- You have to write at _____ 150 words and it is best to write _____ over 150. There is no _____ number of words but writing much more than 150 is wasting time that you could spend working on Part Two.
- In Writing Part One you have to describe one or more bar chart, _____ graph, _____ chart, _____, map, flowchart or other diagram.
- The _____ majority of Writing Part One tasks are best written with a short two-sentence introduction and then two main paragraphs.
- How you decide to divide the information into two paragraphs has _____ importance. It is much more important quickly deciding some way of doing so.
- In the second sentence of the introduction, explain what you will write about in the _____ paragraph and the one after that.
- In each main paragraph, it is usually best to start with the most important or most _____ information. This will help make sure that you select and summarise rather than describe everything.
- Unless it is impossible (as it sometimes is in _____ tasks), you should always _____ and contrast.
- You should mention how slowly/ gradually or _____ things rise/ go up/ climb/ increase or _____.
- Be careful about confusing “change from”, “change to” and “change _____”.
- Don't include your own _____ or ideas of what the data might mean, just select and analyse the data that is there.
- There's no need to conclude or _____ (and it is virtually impossible to do so well).



Writing Part Two

- Read the question very carefully and underline important words, looking for _____ but important differences in the instructions such as between “How much/ To what extent do you agree?” and “Do you agree?”
- Also pay attention to plurals in the question. For _____, if the questions say “Give reasons” you must give more than one.
- The _____ advantage of brainstorming your ideas before you decide on your paragraph structure is that you know you won’t run out of ideas while you are writing. The greatest _____ is that it takes up valuable time.
- Start your introduction with rephrasing the question and then say why the topic is important, topical, relevant or _____.
- If you weigh up both sides of the argument and then give your own conclusions, make sure you say why one side of the argument is more _____ than the other.
- The _____ common problem people have with Writing Part Two is running out of time.
- Support for your arguments should be realistic things like personal _____ and logical _____ rather than things you couldn’t know without research like direct quotes and statistics.
- Leave a _____ of three or four minutes for editing and add better language while you are correcting your mistakes.

General tips on IELTS Speaking

- Ask _____ time you are not sure about the meaning of a question, or state your understanding of the question in your answer. Make all questions as specific as _____.

Speaking Part Two

- You need to speak for _____ one and two minutes.
- Before that you have _____ one minute to prepare what you are going to say, making notes to help you if you like.

Speaking Part Three

- Almost _____ candidates find some Speaking Part Three questions difficult or impossible to understand and/ or answer.

Listening

- There are _____ half points in the test. You get _____ points for a wrongly spelt answer or the wrong use of punctuation such _____ capital letters, apostrophes and hyphens.
- Generally each text has _____ than one kind of question.
- If there is more than one way of writing the answer, e.g. as a _____ or a word, choose the one you are most confident about.
- In general, the words that you have to write down will be the _____ as the text but the words around them will be different.
- You have ten minutes at the _____ of the whole test to transfer your answers to the answer sheet. This is a good time to _____ any answers you haven’t decided on yet.



Reading

- You need to transfer your answers onto the answer sheet _____ the sixty minutes of the exam. You will need up to ten minutes to do this, or some people prefer to do it after they finish _____ text.
- Even someone getting a 9.0 will usually get some answers wrong, so you need to learn when to give up on a question and _____ on to the next one. You can still guess when you transfer to the answer sheet.
- The texts _____ in difficulty as you progress through the test, but there will still be some easier questions with the final text.
- Most people do not have _____ time to read through the whole text first. If you do so, it is only to get an idea of where the information is rather than to understand anything and should be completed in _____ four minutes by using tactics like switching to the next paragraph as soon as you know what a paragraph is about.
- Under _____ circumstances should you leave blank spaces on the answer sheet.
- You should only change your answers if you are _____ that the new answer is correct. First guesses tend to be more accurate than second guesses.

How can you use the words above in useful phrases for the exam? What other phrases mean the same thing? (Note: not all the phrases are useful in the part of the exam that they are being used to describe).

Are there any other useful words or phrases in those sentences (apart from in the gaps)? What are other ways of saying those things?



IELTS tips with gaps which are useful language for the exam – Suggested answers

General tips for Writing

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- Being ambitious can _____ make _____ up for making basic errors, but the most important thing is being comprehensible.
- IELTS Writing is _____ much/ far _____ less academic than journal papers and university theses, for example because you are encouraged to mention _____ your/ personal _____ experience and it is impossible to make reference to quotations. It is more _____ similar _____ to a school essay than to a real academic paper.
- Don't waste time counting individual words – count the words on two lines, then calculate a number of words per line. _____ After _____ that, count the number of lines and work out the total number of words. Alternatively, it is even better do all your writing on official IELTS paper so you know how many words per line you usually have.

Writing Part One

- You have to write at _____ least _____ 150 words and it is best to write _____ just _____ over 150. There is no _____ maximum _____ number of words but writing much more than 150 is wasting time that you could spend working on Part Two.
- In Writing Part One you have to describe one or more bar chart, _____ line _____ graph, _____ pie _____ chart, _____ table _____, map, flowchart or other diagram.
- The _____ vast _____ majority of Writing Part One tasks are best written with a short two-sentence introduction and then two main paragraphs.
- How you decide to divide the information into two paragraphs has _____ little/ minimal _____ importance. It is much more important quickly deciding some way of doing so.
- In the second sentence of the introduction, explain what you will write about in the _____ second/ next/ following _____ paragraph and the one after that.
- In each main paragraph, it is usually best to start with the most important or most _____ obvious/ noticeable _____ information. This will help make sure that you select and summarise rather than describe everything.
- Unless it is impossible (as it sometimes is in _____ flowchart _____ tasks), you should always _____ compare _____ and contrast.
- You should mention how slowly/ gradually or _____ rapidly/ dramatically/ quickly/ suddenly _____ things rise/ go up/ climb/ increase or _____ drop/ fall/ decrease/ decline _____.
- Be careful about confusing “change from”, “change to” and “change _____ by _____”.
- Don't include your own _____ opinions _____ or ideas of what the data might mean, just select and analyse the data that is there.
- There's no need to conclude or _____ summarise _____ (and it is virtually impossible to do so well).



Writing Part Two

- Read the question very carefully and underline important words, looking for _small/ subtle_____ but important differences in the instructions such as between “How much/ To what extent do you agree?” and “Do you agree?”
- Also pay attention to plurals in the question. For _____instance/ example_____, if the questions say “Give reasons” you must give more than one.
- The _____main/ biggest____ advantage of brainstorming your ideas before you decide on your paragraph structure is that you know you won't run out of ideas while you are writing. The greatest __disadvantage_____ is that it takes up valuable time.
- Start your introduction with rephrasing the question and then say why the topic is important, topical, relevant or _____interesting_____.
- If you weigh up both sides of the argument and then give your own conclusions, make sure you say why one side of the argument is more _____persuasive_____ than the other.
- The _____most_____ common problem people have with Writing Part Two is running out of time.
- Support for your arguments should be realistic things like personal __experience_____ and logical _____consequences/ arguments_____ rather than things you couldn't know without research like direct quotes and statistics.
- Leave a _____minimum_____ of three or four minutes for editing and add better language while you are correcting your mistakes.

General tips on IELTS Speaking

- Ask _____each/ every_____ time you are not sure about the meaning of a question, or state your understanding of the question in your answer. Make all questions as specific as _____possible_____.

Speaking Part Two

- You need to speak for _____between_____ one and two minutes.
- Before that you have _____exactly/ precisely_____ one minute to prepare what you are going to say, making notes to help you if you like.

Speaking Part Three

- Almost _____all_____ candidates find some Speaking Part Three questions difficult or impossible to understand and/ or answer.

Listening

- There are __no_____ half points in the test. You get _____no/ zero_____ points for a wrongly spelt answer or the wrong use of punctuation such _____as_____ capital letters, apostrophes and hyphens.
- Generally each text has _____more_____ than one kind of question.
- If there is more than one way of writing the answer, e.g. as a _____figure/ number_____ or a word, choose the one you are most confident about.
- In general, the words that you have to write down will be the _____same_____ as the text but the words around them will be different.
- You have ten minutes at the _____end_____ of the whole test to transfer your answers to the answer sheet. This is a good time to _____guess_____ any answers you haven't decided on yet.



Reading

- You need to transfer your answers onto the answer sheet ___during/ within_____ the sixty minutes of the exam. You will need up to ten minutes to do this, or some people prefer to do it after they finish _____ each_____ text.
- Even someone getting a 9.0 will usually get some answers wrong, so you need to learn when to give up on a question and _____move_____ on to the next one. You can still guess when you transfer to the answer sheet.
- The texts _____increase_____ in difficulty as you progress through the test, but there will still be some easier questions with the final text.
- Most people do not have ___enough/ sufficient_____ time to read through the whole text first. If you do so, it is only to get an idea of where the information is rather than to understand anything and should be completed in ___under_____ four minutes by using tactics like switching to the next paragraph as soon as you know what a paragraph is about.
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