

# IELTS Writing

Task 1: Basics

Paul Winterbottom

# General writing points (Task 1 focus)

1. Do not use contractions in ANY IELTS writing (e.g. Not: “isn’t” but “is not”).
2. Do not use brackets “()”: use a hyphen “-” at the beginning and end of a list (unless the list is the end of a sentence when no hyphen needed at the end)
3. Do not use a forward slash “/”: use commas to separate items and “and” before the last item in a list
4. Be careful to only use capital letters where needed: do not just copy from chart

# Task 1 Question 3

The table gives information on consumer spending on different items in five different countries in 2002.

Country	Food/Drinks/ Tobacco	Clothing/ Footwear	Leisure/ Education
Ireland	28.91%	6.43%	2.21%
Italy	16.36%	9.00%	3.20%
Spain	18.80%	6.51%	1.98%
Sweden	15.77%	5.40%	3.22%
Turkey	32.14%	6.63%	4.35%

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7. How many paragraphs? **4**
8. What is the content of each paragraph?

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4. How long should you spend on Task 1? **20 minutes**
5. Should you write it first or second? **First**
6. How can you make your paragraphing clear? **Blank line between paragraphs & write clearly**
7. How many paragraphs? **4**
8. What is the content of paragraph 1?  
**Paragraph 1: what the data describes**

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Paragraphs 3 &4: Details: related to / developing / expanding the main points in Paragraph 2

# 4 Paragraph Structure

Organisation of IELTS Task 1 answer by paragraph:	
Paragraph 1	What do the charts (etc.) show?
Paragraph 2	Main points: overall / key point (s): usually 2, sometimes 1
Paragraph 3	Detailed points
Paragraph 4	Detailed points

# Targets for Task 1 Writing

1. Answer the question:

“Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.”

2. Meet the requirements specified in the Band Descriptors

# Band Descriptors

IELTS™		WRITING TASK 1: Band Descriptors (public version)		
Band	Task achievement	Coherence and cohesion	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fully satisfies all the requirements of the task</li> <li>clearly presents a fully developed response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention</li> <li>skilfully manages paragraphing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>covers all requirements of the task sufficiently</li> <li>presents, highlights and illustrates key features/ bullet points clearly and appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sequences information and ideas logically</li> <li>manages all aspects of cohesion well</li> <li>uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings</li> <li>skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation</li> <li>produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a wide range of structures</li> <li>the majority of sentences are error-free</li> <li>makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>covers the requirements of the task</li> <li>(A) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages</li> <li>(GT) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriate</li> <li>clearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout</li> <li>uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision</li> <li>uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation</li> <li>may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a variety of complex structures</li> <li>produces frequent error-free sentences</li> <li>has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addresses the requirements of the task</li> <li>(A) presents an overview with information appropriately selected</li> <li>(GT) presents a purpose that is generally clear; there may be inconsistencies in tone</li> <li>presents and adequately highlights key features/ bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression</li> <li>uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical</li> <li>may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task</li> <li>attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy</li> <li>makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms</li> <li>makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generally addresses the task; the format may be inappropriate in places</li> <li>(A) recounts detail mechanically with no clear overview; there may be no data to support the description</li> <li>(GT) may present a purpose for the letter that is unclear at times; the tone may be variable and sometimes inappropriate</li> <li>presents, but inadequately covers, key features/ bullet points; there may be a tendency to focus on details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression</li> <li>makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices</li> <li>may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task</li> <li>may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses only a limited range of structures</li> <li>attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences</li> <li>may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts to address the task but does not cover all key features/bullet points; the format may be inappropriate</li> <li>(GT) fails to clearly explain the purpose of the letter; the tone may be inappropriate</li> <li>may confuse key features/bullet points with detail; parts may be unclear, irrelevant, repetitive or inaccurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response</li> <li>uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task</li> <li>has limited control of word formation and/or spelling;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>errors may cause strain for the reader</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses</li> <li>some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fails to address the task, which may have been completely misunderstood</li> <li>presents limited ideas which may be largely irrelevant/repetitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not organise ideas logically</li> <li>may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling</li> <li>errors may severely distort the message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answer is barely related to the task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has very little control of organisational features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>answer is completely unrelated to the task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fails to communicate any message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can only use a few isolated words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cannot use sentence forms at all</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not attend</li> <li>does not attempt the task in any way</li> <li>writes a totally memorised response</li> </ul>			

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## Descriptors (public version)

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses only a limited range of structures</li> </ul>

# Key points from band descriptors:

## Task achievement

- Band 7: clear overview of main trends, appropriately selected
- Band 8: covers all the requirements of the task

## Coherence and cohesion

- Band 7: logically organises information and ideas
- Band 8: sequences information and ideas logically
- Band 9: skilfully manages paragraphing

## Lexical resource

- Band 7: uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility

## Grammatical range and accuracy

- Band 7: produces frequent error free sentences
- Band 8: the majority of sentences are error free

