

SSSI RESOURCE · TEST PREP

The 60-Day IELTS Plan

A free, structured study plan to reach Band 7.0 in two months — built for students studying with limited resources.

Before you begin

This plan assumes a starting level of Band 5.5 to 6.0 and a target of Band 7.0 (the threshold most scholarships require). If you are starting below 5.5, double the timeline. If you are already 6.5+, you can compress the plan to 30 days.

You will need: a Cambridge IELTS Official Practice book (any volume 13–18), a notebook, a smartphone with a voice recorder, and 2–3 hours per day. Everything else recommended below is free online.

Phase 1 — Diagnostic and foundations (Days 1–10)

Day 1: Diagnostic full test

Sit one complete IELTS Academic test under exam conditions. Mark it honestly using the official answer key. Record your band score for each module. This is your baseline. Do not be discouraged.

Days 2–10: Module fundamentals

- **Listening** — 30 min/day. Cambridge IELTS Test 1, Sections 1–4. Re-listen with the transcript after marking.
- **Reading** — 45 min/day. One passage per day. Focus on identifying question type before reading the text.
- **Writing** — Task 1 every other day, Task 2 every other day. Use a 4-paragraph structure. Word counts: T1 ≥ 150, T2 ≥ 250.
- **Speaking** — 15 min/day. Cycle through Part 1 question banks (family, work, hometown, hobbies).
- **Vocabulary** — 10 academic words per day. Use them in a sentence. Review weekly.

Phase 2 — Skill building (Days 11–30)

Listening — target Band 7

- Practice 'predicting the answer' — read questions before audio starts
- Train spelling: most lost marks at Band 6–7 are misspelt words you actually heard correctly

- Practice multi-speaker Section 3 with British Council 'IELTS Listening Practice' (free, YouTube)

Reading — target Band 7

- Build speed: aim for 17 minutes per passage by Day 20, 16 minutes by Day 30
- Master True/False/Not Given — the single highest-lost question type
- Skim first, scan second, read fully only when needed

Writing — target Band 7

- Task 1: practice all 7 chart types (line, bar, pie, table, map, process, multi-chart)
- Task 2: master 4 essay types (opinion, discussion, problem/solution, advantages/disadvantages)
- Use IELTS Liz and IELTS Simon (free websites) for model answers
- Submit one Task 2 per week to a mentor or peer for marking

Speaking — target Band 7

- Record every Part 2 long-turn answer. Listen back the same day
- Build a 'topic bank': prepare 2-minute answers for 30 common Part 2 topics
- Practice Part 3 with a study partner — these are the abstract follow-up questions
- Fluency over perfection: it is better to keep talking than to pause searching for the perfect word

Phase 3 — Exam strategy and mocks (Days 31–55)

Weekly schedule

Day	Focus	Time
Mon	Listening + Speaking	90 min
Tue	Reading + Writing Task 1	120 min
Wed	Writing Task 2 + vocabulary	90 min
Thu	Listening + Reading	120 min
Fri	Speaking practice with partner	60 min
Sat	Full mock test	165 min

Sun	Review mock + rest	60 min
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Mock tests

Sit a full mock on Day 35, Day 45, and Day 55. Track band scores in a notebook. The trend matters more than any single result.

Phase 4 — Exam week (Days 56–60)

- Day 56: light reading and listening. No new material
- Day 57: review your personal error log. Do not take a full test
- Day 58: speaking practice only — 30 minutes of warm-up topics
- Day 59: rest. Pack your ID, confirmation, water, snack. Sleep 8 hours
- Day 60 (exam day): arrive 60 minutes early. Eat a normal breakfast. Trust your training

Score targets by module

Module	Band 6.5	Band 7.0	Band 7.5
Listening	23/40 correct	30/40	32/40
Reading (Academic)	23/40 correct	30/40	33/40
Writing	Coherent, some errors	Clear, mostly accurate	Sophisticated, near-native
Speaking	Speaks at length, repeats 50%	Flexible, idiomatic	Fluent with rare hesitation

Free resources to use

- **ielts.org** — official sample tests and band descriptors
- **British Council 'IELTS Prep'** app — free practice on phone
- **IELTS Liz, IELTS Simon, IELTS Advantage** — model essays and tips
- **BBC Learning English** — listening practice with natural British speakers
- **SSSI IELTS WhatsApp group** — daily speaking practice with peers (request access via the Mentorship page)

Fee waiver and free test options

- British Council in Juba, Nairobi, Kampala, Khartoum, Addis Ababa — IELTS available with standard fees
- Several scholarships (Mastercard Foundation, DAFI) reimburse the test fee on successful application
- Duolingo English Test ($\approx$ USD 65, accepted by 5,000+ institutions) is significantly cheaper than IELTS
- Some universities waive the language test for applicants whose secondary education was in English

If you cannot afford IELTS, take the Duolingo English Test first. Many scholarships and universities accept a DET score of 115+ as equivalent to IELTS 6.5.