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Free official exam preparation materials for the IELTS General test

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Objective

This document provides an inventory of free test preparation resources and exam practice materials that aim to assist IELTS instructors and those who plan to sit the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) General examination.

Discussion

There are three business partners that comprise the IELTS consortium. These are:

The British Council

<https://ielts.britishcouncil.org/>

IDP: IELTS Australia

<https://www.idp.com/australia/ielts>

University of Cambridge

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/ielts/>

Free official exam preparation materials are available at the websites listed above.

This document only lists exam preparation material that has been published by an IELTS business partner or has been endorsed by an IELTS business partner.

Academic versus General

The IELTS Academic and IELTS General exams use the same test questions for the speaking and listening components. As stated by IELTS (2017, NP):

“There are two types of the IELTS test: IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training. Listening and Speaking are the same for both tests, but the subject matter of the Reading and Writing components differs depending on which test you take.”

Those who prepare for the IELTS General examination may use official test preparation materials that are marked ‘IELTS Academic’ and *vice versa* for the speaking and listening components of this test.

Background

There are thousands of open-access (free) and commercial IELTS exam preparation resources available on the internet and via other outlets such as bookstores. The Free School classifies these materials in four ways, as shown in the table below.

IELTS Exam Preparation Resources

1. IELTS official publications: Free practice materials.	2. IELTS official publications: Commercial practice materials.
3. Non-IELTS sources: Free practice materials.	4. Non-IELTS sources: Commercial practice materials.

This document examines “1. IELTS official publications: Free practice materials”.

This presentation does not discuss or endorse IELTS exam preparation material that has been published by non-IELTS sources. The Free School does not promote these materials as the quality of these resources varies widely. Some of these exam preparation materials are of excellent quality as they strongly reflect the content, format and standards of the IELTS examination. Some materials are poor to average quality. To varying degrees, they do not accurately reflect the content, format and standards of the IELTS examination.

Those who plan to sit for an IELTS exam should only consult unofficial exam preparation materials if they have access to a qualified and experienced IELTS tutor who can review the suitability of these materials on a case-by-case basis.

Classification

The Free School identifies six types of IELTS exam preparation and exam practice resources. These include resources that offer:

1. Advice about the structure of the IELTS exam
2. Advice about IELTS’s scoring system
3. General advice about how to prepare for the IELTS examination
4. Technical advice on how to answer exam questions
5. Exam question examples
6. Examples of exam answers provided by test-takers.

The remainder of this document provides details about where members of the public can access each of these six official exam preparation materials for free-of-charge.

IELTS Official on YouTube

As at 4 January 2017, IELTS's official YouTube account contains 30 videos. These include examples of all six categories of official materials listed in the previous subsection. You may preview this menu at the following web address:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/IELTsofficial/videos>

IDP Australia on YouTube

As at 4 January 2017, IDP Australia's official YouTube account has 56 videos. These include examples of all six categories of official materials listed in the previous subsection. You may preview this menu at the following web address:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/IELTSEssentials/videos>

Cambridge IELTS (Listening)

As at 4 January 2017, Cambridge IELTS's official YouTube account has 129 videos. These resources all relate to the IELTS listening examination component. You may preview this menu at the following web address:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH7dokkVNtvrEI3qOvYuW2g/videos>

This document does not list the full contents of these three YouTube catalogues. It includes samples of these resources in inventory list below.

Advice about the structure of the IELTS exam

“Information for candidates: Introducing IELTS to test-takers”

<https://www.ielts.org/~media/publications/information-for-candidates/ielts-information-for-candidates-2015-english-uk.ashx>

“Test format”

<https://www.ielts.org/about-the-test/test-format>

“Test format”

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/ielts/test-format/>

“Understand the IELTS test format: Overview of the IELTS test”

<https://www.ieltsessentials.com/global/testinformation>

Advice about IELTS’s scoring system

“IELTS scoring in detail”

<https://www.ielts.org/ielts-for-organisations/ielts-scoring-in-detail>

“IELTS assessment criteria”

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/find-out-about-results/ielts-assessment-criteria>

“Speaking: band descriptors (public version)”

<https://www.ielts.org/~media/pdfs/speaking-band-descriptors.ashx>

General advice

“Test day tips”

<https://www.ielts.org/book-a-test/on-test-day>

“Advice on preparing for IELTS”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKwp175tQXM>

Technical advice

IDP Australia

“Five top tips to improve your IELTS Listening score”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSvEUWsKA7Q>

Cambridge University

“Frequently Asked Questions” (Technical advice)

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/269899-ielts-general-training-faqs.pdf>

British Council

“Reading test advice”

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-your-test/test-day-advice/reading-test-advice>

“Listening test advice”

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-your-test/test-day-advice/listening-test-advice>

“Writing test advice”

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-your-test/test-day-advice/writing-test-advice>

“Speaking test advice”

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-your-test/test-day-advice/speaking-test-advice>

Sample exam questions

IELTS

“Sample test questions”

<https://www.ielts.org/about-the-test/sample-test-questions>

IDP Australia

“Free IELTS practice tests”

<http://idpielts.me/prepare-ielts/free-ielts-practice-tests/>

<https://ielts.com.au/study-for-ielts/practice-test/>

“Listening practice tests”

<https://www.ieltsessentials.com/global/prepare/freepracticetests/listeningpracticetests>

“IELTS speaking”

<https://www.ieltsessentials.com/global/prepare/freepracticetests/speakingpracticetests>

“Listening practice tests”

<https://www.ieltsessentials.com/global/prepare/freepracticetests/listeningpracticetests>

“IELTS General Reading Practice Tests”

IELTS identify three types of General reading tasks:

1. Short factual tests
2. Short factual tests on work-related issues
3. Longer exercise on a general interest topic.

At least one example of each is found at this web-link:

<https://www.ieltsessentials.com/global/prepare/freepracticetests/generaltrainingreadingpractice>

British Council

“Free IELTS practice Tests”

This webpage provides access to reading, writing, listening and speaking practice exams.

Check the links on the text box on the left of the screen.

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-test/free-practice-tests>

“Free IELTS practice activities and resources”

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-test/british-council-online-resources>

“Listening practice test 1”

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-your-test/free-ielts-practice-tests/listening-practice-test-1>

Cambridge University

“Free paper-based sample tests”

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/ielts/preparation/>

Examples of exam answers provided by test-takers

Multiple examples of speaking tests and graded answers appear at

<https://www.youtube.com/user/IELTSoOfficial/videos>

14 Speaking examples - examiner and student feature this play list

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5T6zglm1Onc&list=PLSAx4faA_rjNEb16E7FGDnQTSn9dAuDPv&index=1

“IELTS Speaking test sample - Part 3 (Li, Band 6)”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzd3sSCLMrg>

“Sample candidate writing scripts and examiner comments”

https://www.ielts.org/~media/pdfs/115004_general_training_writing_sample_scripts.ashx

Official commercial material available for free

Members of the IELTS consortium have authored numerous texts and digital discs that are available for purchase. These materials aim to assist IELTS tutors and those who aim to take the IELTS test. The best known books in this collection are the numbered Cambridge IELTS series books. Copies of these books are freely available at certain public libraries and college libraries. For example, the University of Technology, Sydney maintains a comprehensive inventory of the Cambridge IELTS series. These are archived in the 428.24 Dewey Index range. In some cases, members of the public may view these books and photocopy small sections of these books at libraries that allow members of the public to enter the library.

Conclusion

This document classifies the six different types of open access official IELTS preparation resources that are available on the World Wide Web. This document is not a complete list of all open-access training and exam practice resources published by IDP Australia, Cambridge University and the British Council. These materials are available at hundreds of different sub-webpages. The vast majority of official IELTS open-access resources are available via the sub-pages of the web-links that appear in this presentation.

References

International English Language Testing System (2017), *Test format*,

<<https://www.ielts.org/about-the-test/test-format>>. Accessed 21 December 2016.

Other resources

“Free IELTS online course”

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-ielts/free-ielts-online-course>


“IELTS 1001 Ways” Cell-phone application (‘app’)

<http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-ielts/ielts-1001-ways-app>

Ask an IELTS question

<http://chat.thefreeschool.education/>

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