

How to stop over thinking and over complicating IELTS task

Ben Worthington: OK right then, so let's talk about IELTS

Allejandro: OK, perfect.

Ben Worthington: and how many times did you take it?

Allejandro: well luckily, just once.

Ben Worthington: just once,

Allejandro: yes, I got an 8.5 for listening, I think I had an 8 reading, 7 in writing, yes. 7.5, 8.5 8, 8.5 7, the whole spectrum

Ben Worthington: yes, the whole spectrum.

Allejandro: 7.5, I think I was 8.

Speaker: right, that's very good, that's very good, well done Allejandro, excellent.

Allejandro: thank you.

Ben Worthington: what was your biggest challenge, when you were preparing for it?

Allejandro: well, I started by learning how to pass the exam you know, reading, making a lot of research online on the internet. I have to say there is plenty of you know, podcast's, blog's, website. I started by doing some mock test, then I noticed that I hadn't any problem with the reading and the listening part of the exam, because it was kind of easy for me.

Ben Worthington: yea

Allejandro: and then, I started writing some essays with my wife, me and my wife were trying to correct ourselves you know, and I noticed that I had tendency to complicate my sentences.

Ben Worthington: yea

Allejandro: or, also lack of restructure in my essays

Ben Worthington: yea

Allejandro: and in my speaking part, I had some problems with the fluency.

Ben Worthington: I see, and how did you overcome the issue with the fluency?

Allejandro: I was doing some essays by myself for maybe a month or two, and then I realized that I need some help. So I looked for a private teacher here in Barcelona, I have to say that she really putted me on the track, she made me be aware of my most common mistakes in writing and in speaking but I got about I don't know, 15 private lessons kind of, and after that my teacher went back to Russia, she was from Russia. And after that, well you know august is not a really good month for in Spain, then I decided to go back to my idea in September okay. So in October I was kind of lazy, I had to do some really real pressure so what I did, was to set up a date for the exam, and that really helped me a lot because like I said, in January am going to take the exam.

And then I started to work a lot you know, for the speaking, I had one application on my cell phone and its the part one, part two and part three and I had an application on my cell phone, which had a lot of topics. So from the part one, okay tell me about your work, and it was about fifty questions about work, fifty questions about travelling, about the family, about service. So when I came home, I started to call out by my self. So I just hit the play, there was a voice saying, what is the main benefit of going into or something like that. And then I answered by myself here, it was kind of crazy but it was really helpful but for my fluency.

Ben Worthington: you just spoke to yourself like in the kitchen or wherever, answering the question?

Allejandro: yes.

Ben Worthington: with the main objective of getting fluent?

Allejandro: yes.

Ben Worthington: that's interesting.

Allejandro: and with my wife, because she also had to take the. Am trying to fit in the time that you're supposed to answer and to look for ways to develop a better answer you know, that kind of stuff. I had to brush up on some of my grammar as well, and I was following an English church course, maybe you'll know, its not really famous. English teacher here in Spain, his name is.

Ben Worthington: yes.

Allejandro: and I used to listen to this lessons on my way to work and for sure, your pod cast was really helpful. I have to say, it was really helpful for me trying to find ways to develop my answer, trying to find ways to improve my speaking skills and as for my writing skills. And in my writing skills you know, I have to tell you there's a lot of materials there on the internet, after a lot of research, I have to say not all are really good material. And whatever it was, I have spent some small money in my opinion at least, small money on a few things I bought. This is splendid speaking you know, the website, splendid speaking.

So I got enrolled for the IELTS and IELTS preparation and for the writing part one, I got

Allejandro: yes, and more book's about how to prepare for the part one of their writing test and for the part two of maybe you know, really good guy whose name is Mr Worthington

Ben Worthington: oh yes, I know him.

Allejandro: he has this really good essay about the course for preparing yourself for the part two because you know, when I was reading, I've being reading a lot of things about how to prepare for the part two the exam. And some people say okay, you have to focus on this and you have to make a brainstorm of you're ideas and it was kind of messy you know, I didn't know which way to follow you know, I didn't know if I had to write fifteen sentences, thirteen, twenty. And after listening to your pod cast, I decided to give a trial to your course and I have to say this is my opinion and my wives opinion, it was really helpful.

Actually my wife also got on the writing. Yes, because it was so simple, so clear, effective, efficient, I have to really thank you for this course because it really made me feel focused, and I get rate of the other ideas and I decided to well maybe it worked for me you know, but maybe for some other guy really worked for me.

Ben Worthington: good, that's good.

Allejandro: yes, because sometimes its kind of you're overwhelmed with so much materials on the internet saying do this and no, do this and you have to learn twenty words everyday for the vocabulary, no you have to do this, this is wrong, this is good, this is bad. So it was kind of you know,

Ben Worthington: I know exactly what you mean, its crazy. Every blogger, every, every IELTS teacher has like a different idea and I think if you don't sort of like sit down and focus and choose one that you believe the most or you have the most confidence in, and you just try and follow maybe three or four, you end up nowhere and completely overwhelmed. And especially with the task two question because there's so much to think about and incorporate, and then if you add to following the advisers, maybe three or four different tutors, you end up crazy, I can totally understand what you mean there.

Allejandro: yes, especially as you said on part two, I have to say that in my opinion we are really but, which should I say, OK first, analyse the question, they are asking for discuss an opinion or contrast two opinions or find a solution, problem and solution. And it was kind of I don't know, I don't know which kind of essay this one is. So I was trying, just because they said if its a problem plus solution essay, you have to write this and then you have to write this and then, you have to not write this and at the end that its like that.

But in case there's a contrast two opinions, to write this other thing and then you have to write and then it was kind of crazy. And it was kind of crazy trying to fill that, which kind of essay is

this. And your method is not like that, it's just well, am not going to say what your method is, but this is really helpful because it doesn't matter what kind of essay they are asking you, it's always the same

Ben Worthington: it's just following simple steps, which will just make it automatic clear, an essay that's going to get there, the points are the task response. That was the idea when I started doing it. so, well thank you very much Alejandro.

Alejandro: no thank you, and I have to say it really works for me and my wife even during our preparation, we noticed how much we've improved our essays.

Ben Worthington: yes that's good, am really happy but I just have to mention that there was a lot, there was work involved, you were writing essays and it wasn't like a quick fix, there was work involved and you were writing, I was correcting. So, just saw the lesson as understand, that it's not buy the e-book and then sit at home and watch the television.

Alejandro: yes

Ben Worthington: you know, it's buy the book and do the work involved.

Alejandro: yes, and there's something really good about your course, that is your deadline, you need to have a deadline. Just say OK am here at your disposal for one month or something like that, one month or three weeks or something like that. And I still have to send you an essay within a week or within two weeks or something like that. That's really good because it helps you, it gives you a little motivation to do your home work because it says hey, am paying for this teacher, I have this teacher at my disposal, I have to make the most of this course.

So because if this say okay, here's the course and you can read the course whenever you want or you know, you can say okay I'm procrastinate and I'll do it tomorrow. But in case you have to do it as soon as possible because there's a deadline, I think that's a really good point.

Ben Worthington: yes, definitely I know because when I was just from uni, I realized that as there's no deadline, it's just as you say in Spanish " manyana manyana", it's just borrow and you just push it over but if there's somebody there at your back, okay. You've got a week to respond to this essay question, get it done or lose your cash, simple as.

Alejandro: yes, same with the isle's, what I did to push me to study and do my homework was hey, am going to lose 200 Euros and so I had to study for January and I have to study on Christmas time, that's a matter. I had to do it because I knew my exam was just around the corner you know

Ben Worthington: exactly, and the good thing is well, what you did was you the day, way in the future. Like I think you gave yourself three months, three months for solid preparation. And just work rather than sort of like doing the exam, seeing your grade and then putting in to do the

exam straight away, just buying another exam, three week later and then study like mad. Its best to be prepared and to patiently prepare for you know, three months long term preparation and you'll see better improvement in your English, and better practise as well because with more time and more patience, you're going to get better result. So,that was a good point that you did that.

Allejandro: because when it was on February, march, April, I was saying okay I'll read when am ready, but I wasn't going to be ready ever, I didn't have the pressure to study.

Ben Worthington: right, Allejandro what are you're plans now? Are you going to go to Australia in the end?

Allejandro well at the end, we don't know actually because after we got the isle's, we were really happy you know, our opinion was the only obstacle in our way to Australia okay?

Ben Worthington: right, am going to have to go now but

Allejandro: okay thank you, really.

Ben Worthington: have a good weekend, it was a pleasure and yes, keep in contact if you need anything.

Allejandro: yes sure.