



Female Voice: You are now listening to the IELTS podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

INTRODUCTION

Ben: Hello there, IELTS podcast listeners. In this episode, we're going to be talking to **Diana who has managed to pass IELTS and is now residing in Western Australia.** Could you give us an introduction please, Diana? Tell us about yourself, where you're from, and why you're taking IELTS.

Diana: My name is Diana. I am 31 years old and I live-- I'm from Germany and I live in Perth, in Western Australia since about seven years now and I had to take the IELTS because I want to go back to uni.

Ben: Interesting.

Diana: And I did a bachelor in Germany and I kind of changed career when I got here, so now I want to...

Ben: Very interesting. Wow! What do you want to study at university in Australia?



Diana: I want to study preferably Master in Nursing because I have a graduate-entry because I have a bachelor or the other option would be bachelor in nursing, but because my IELTS now is good enough for the Masters, so I'm hoping to get into that.

NURSES IN AUSTRALIA

Ben: Excellent. Is there a lot of demand for nurses in Australia at the moment?

Diana: Yes.

Ben: Really?

Diana: Yes, it is. That's why they made it harder, the entry exam. Right before, you could study easily. You didn't need the IELTS going into university only once you register. Once you finish your study and you register as a nurse, that's when you needed the IELTS and now they want it before you enter the university.

Ben: Interesting, but there's a lot of demand for people who want to work or there's a lot of like open positions that need filling?



Diana: No, there are just lots of people who do nursing and apparently, even most of them don't end up doing nursing. They just do it as bridging for something else.

Ben: You're going back to uni now that you've got the IELTS exam, how many times did you take the exam?

Diana: I took it four times.

Ben: Right, okay, four times. This is perfectly normal, Diana. I hear so many students and to be honest with you, four seems to be at the lower end of the scale. There are some students who pass first time, but some of them they can take the test up to as many as 20 times which is quite sad. Yes.

Diana: It's so stressful.

Ben: Yes, I totally agree with you there; all the [unintelligible 00:02:53.14] of preparing, of doing the test and going to the test center, yes. It's very stressful. You did the exam four times. What was your pain point? What was really holding you back?

Diana: There was only the writing. Everything else was fine.

Ben: Really?

Diana: Yes.



Ben: What were your scores for the other areas?

Diana: Kind of range, but nothing lower than 6.5; usually 7s.

Ben: Around 6.5 to a 7.

Diana: Yes, sometimes even an 8 [unintelligible 00:03:27.27], sometimes like once and reading. Once I didn't really prepare for it so it got a bit lower, but always 6.5 or above.

Ben: Interesting and for the-- for your nursing requirements to start university, what were they asking for?

Diana: The Masters is asking 7, nothing lower than 7 and the bachelor 6.5.

Ben: And how did you prepare for the other parts of the exam?

Diana: For the other parts?

Ben: Yes, for the reading, the listening, speaking?

Diana: For listening I did like a one type test, but I found that really easy living in Australia. I didn't have a problem at all. That one I scored always like 8 or something. So easy for me, but then the reading is tough. I just did [practice tests](#). Every time before the test, I had to do some practices to get back on track.



Ben: Got you. To get back up to speed, you did the practice tests. Is that right?

Diana: Because it's really hard for your brain. I found it very hard sometimes just to stay on track and--

Ben: Absolutely.

Diana: --for the different types of questions.

Ben: To get familiar with the exam, the format, the types of questions, and the timing as well I guess. And what was happening with your writing?

Diana: Yes, the writing was something I don't really enjoy doing I guess, so I knew it's not going to be the best. So, I picked some-- before the first test, I had a booklet to go through.

Ben: Where did you get the booklet from?

Diana: **Thesaurus** of a friend who had a course long time ago and then I enrolled online. There was something website when you enroll for the test you can log in. Is it ielts.com or something?

Ben: ielts.org

Diana: Yes, I think so.

Ben: How was that course?



Diana: Yes, I went through that. I thought it was good, but it would never bring me up. Like my-- every time I scored 6. So, it was good for the basics only, obviously.

Ben: I see, like an introduction.

Diana: Which I felt a bit-- that should be better because that's the IELTS and that's what they recommend.

Ben: Yes, but I can see it from their point of view. If they give you a really detailed comprehensive course, you might pass the first time which...

Diana: Oh my God.

Ben: So, you had a look at that course and they kind of gave you basic introduction and then you took the test and you were still stuck at a 6. Is that correct?

Diana: Every time I would get a 6. Although the second time I remember was surely the best because the first time I was I was like just see how it goes. Maybe I'm lucky and then the second time I did a mistake, so I didn't expect much, but I got a 6 again. So, I was like must be [even lower? 00:06:31.07] because I didn't read the question properly.

Ben: I see. I see.

Diana: It's very tricky. It's like every question is so different.



Ben: Yes, that's true. That's true.

Diana: You really have to analyze it.

BIGGEST ISSUE WITH THE WRITING

Ben: What was the biggest issue for you with the writing? Would you say it was the question or paragraphing or something else?

Diana: I think it was the question like to know what they want or which categories to choose. Sometimes I found that tricky and then definitely like-- well, I found out after doing your course that mostly it's task achievement for me. I would go off topic easily.

Ben: Interesting. How did you discover that you were going off-topic with your essays?

Diana: Only through to your online course; the correction.

Ben: Right, okay. So, it was one of the teachers-- one of the ex-IELTS examiners we have saying Diana, you're not answering the question or you've gone off-topic. Is that right?

Diana: Yes.



Ben: Right. Interesting and then once you realized that you went off-topic, what steps did you take to make sure that your next essays were on topic?

Diana: The **paragraphing**, like stick with the points and just as you explain to get the question into two and then just really stick to it. Like sometimes you want to say something else, but it's not important. So, just to stick with it.

Ben: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Just for the listeners, in the [course](#), we talk about splitting the question up to-- [assigning paragraphs to ideas-- assigning ideas to paragraphs](#), ideas you get from the question and then sticking to that plan. No deviation. If new ideas pop into your mind, ignore them and just keep to the plan and that's exactly what you did. Is that right, Diana?

Diana: Yes.

Ben: So, you started to stick to the plan and after your first essay correction, did you find yourself going off-topic again or was that problem solved in the first [essay correction](#)?

Diana: No, it took a few times up until the end pretty much.

Ben: Really?

Diana: Every time I would... Even sometimes I think the way I analyzed the question was probably wrong and then that happened in the beginning I remember. So, then I would have a question about one viewpoint and I add a second viewpoint to it because I thought they want



to hear the opposite side, but if that's not in the question you're not supposed to do that, right? So, I would talk about something like the opposite of what they're asking.

Ben: I see.

Diana: So, I think I analyzed the question wrong.

Ben: I see. Yes, this is quite a tricky component of the IELTS I think because you can get into almost like a fashion or you can get into a habit of answering questions in a certain way, but then you might find a different style of question and it can just totally-- your original style of answering is not appropriate.

Diana: Yes.

Ben: So, you need to find another--

Diana: Yes, that's what I found really tricky; all the different kinds of questions.

Ben: Yes, it is tough. **So, by the end of the course, you think you sorted out that problem?**

Diana: **Yes, for my last essay, there were really good,** which [unintelligible 00:10:04.12]

Ben: And that's just in time for the exam. Is that right?

Diana: Yes, that's right.



Ben: Interesting, interesting.

Diana: It was just a week before or something, yes.

Ben: Wow! So, you really did improve just in time before the exam. Is that right?

Diana: Yes.

Ben: And how long did it take you to get through the whole course?

Diana: I think it took me almost four weeks, but I have two kids, so I did not study every day. Maybe in the last week I would try to study every day in the night time just to correct the essay.

Ben: So, if you didn't have your kids, you could probably work through the course faster.

Diana: Yes, I would say in probably two weeks if you really push it.

Ben: Cool, but it's good though. **Well done to you for managing to get through the course, complete the assignments that we sent you and well done and doing it all with a family as well.** That's not easy. Like my sister, we were having dinner the other day-- Wow! Can you hear that?

Diana: Yes, what is that?



Ben: It's a crazy thunderstorm here. It's insane.

Diana: Oh really.

Ben: Yes, yes. Anyway, sorry. I was saying that my sister has just had a child and she's not working and she's just like a housewife and she said I don't have any time to look online and I was like why don't you have any time? You don't have a job and she just got up--

Diana: You never say that.

Ben: I know. I realized and she was just sitting there just eating breakfast and suddenly her back went straight and her neck when straight and she's like what do you mean I don't have a job and I was like oops never mind.

Diana: Yes, they have to make the time and prioritize a lot.

Ben: Yes, absolutely and having a child is a full-time job, so I imagine having two kids is two full-time jobs, I imagine.

Diana: I checked online for courses like some in Perth, but I was like you know what? I cannot go every day, so I really needed something online more convenient.

Ben: Right, I see. You couldn't go online because of your other responsibilities.

Diana: No, online is the better option because I couldn't go to school every day.



Ben: Yes, that's what I meant. So you couldn't go to normal--

Diana: Or like 9 a.m. in the morning [unintelligible 00:12:40.14] or whatever.

Ben: Got you. That's what I meant. I see. So, how did you choose the [IELTS podcast course](#)? Why did you choose that one and not another course?

Diana: Well, I did quite some research first and then as I said, yes I contacted some in Perth and some of them even didn't give me any hope.

Ben: You contacted some teachers in Perth.

Diana: They were like-- yes, I think some coach kind of schools and they offer courses.

Ben: Okay, I see.

Diana: And one was like-- he was trying to convince me to do another test. That's when I was like oh my God, where is this going? I said I try one more time. And then there's a Facebook group in Perth for the German community, so I just typed in the search for IELTS and then someone recommended you on IELTS podcast.

Ben: Wow! Excellent. Wow! I didn't know that.

Diana: Yes, my Google research never ended up on you by the way.



Ben: Okay, that's good to know. I need to correct that.

Diana: I googled quite a lot, so I was glad.

Ben: Yes, quite lucky. That's a good search technique to look into the [Facebook groups](#). Yes, I never thought about that.

Diana: I was very desperate. I was like I need to pass this.

Ben: I see. I see.

Diana: I have like a time limit. I really need to start next year.

DIANA'S PLANS AFTER PASSING IELTS

Ben: Right, in September. Now that you've finished, are you going to continuing with your English or do you start in September your-- was it Bachelor's course you're doing in the end?

Diana: No. Actually, I'm hoping to stay for the Masters and that will start next year. They will start next year in Feb. I just need to do one unit. If I get accepted, I'll find out next month in August then I will have one unit in October probably and then start next year in February. I got



accepted for the Bachelor and I couldn't start last Monday, but I rejected. I said no. No, I will wait.

Ben: You're going to go for the higher one, for the masters.

Diana: Yes.

Ben: Good for you. Good for you, Diana and **what was your writing score in the end for the writing?**

Diana: There was 7.

Ben: 7! Excellent. Good. Good. Fantastic.

Diana: So, I was like I'm definitely going to have a 6.5 I was confident and then I saw a 7, so I was like yes.

Ben: Super. Well done.

Diana: That was great.

Ben: And in your previous exams it was a 6 or?

Diana: 6 yes, every time. So, three times a 6.

Ben: Wow! [And then you did the course and you jumped to the 7?](#)



Diana: Yes.

WRITING TASK 2 QUESTION

Ben: Excellent work. Excellent. Now then, just one last thing. What was the-- [do you remember your question on the exam?](#)

Diana: Hang on, yes. It was about [crime](#). So, first I was a bit panicky. I was like oh my God, crime? Couldn't they just have brought me the best question? Some people-- I just try to memorize it, that one opinion. So, some people think putting people to prison is the only way and others think only to educate them or something like this that wasn't right, but...

Ben: Right, okay.

Diana: So, the main point is to educate them and others would argue just to put them to jail.

Ben: And for that, how did you write your essay for that?

Diana: In the end, it was agree disagree I think and I disagreed with the one just putting them-- just educate them because that will be stupid and then first I said just education won't be enough and my second paragraph was that they have to go to prison because they did



something wrong, but while they are in prison they should get an education to change their mind, whatever.

Ben: Excellent. And did you follow the--

Diana: Yes, I followed the structure, yes.

Ben: Got you. The structure that's taught in the course.

Diana: Yes. I had it.

Ben: Super. Super.

ONE IMPORTANT VOCABULARY FROM THE COURSE

Diana: Because the question it said-- and also the night before I learned one [vocabulary](#) from your course.

Ben: Tell us.

Diana: What is it? **Delinquency**?

Ben: **Delinquency**. Yes, yes.



Diana: Delinquency. So, my last word was **delinquency**. The last word of the essay was **delinquency**.

IELTS ONLINE COURSE

Ben: That is super. Do you remember how you got that word? Was it in one of the lists of collocations that we send with the question? It doesn't matter. I was just curious. So, we're near the end now. **What would you say to anybody who is thinking about joining the online course?**

Diana: I would say it's definitely a very good idea and it's so helpful. First of all, as well to get the structure of the whole thing about how to write the essay and how to get ideas and things like that and then the best thing obviously is the feedback otherwise you won't know what you are doing wrong. The way you do the feedback is good as well because you send the video, so I have to work through it. I don't just have it on paper and print it out. I have to fix it myself. That was sometimes the hardest part; to fix in what they say and that took sometimes really long. I guess that's how you learn. For me, also it gave me a time I had to do it because they send you an essay topic. You have to do that topic; before I would choose the easy one. Maybe I don't like this I do the other one and they would send you hard ones, which is good.



Ben: Yes. Absolutely. We've got a question for the students when they [buy a single essay correction](#). And is it a difficult question and a lot of them say I don't know how to answer this one. Can I write another one? And I'm really nasty I must admit because I've said and I've told the other teachers don't accept anything else. Make them do the difficult one because, in the exam, you cannot choose. We can't have it sort of like softy softy on the course and then welcome to reality when you're in the IELTS IDP British Council center. That's not going to be a truthful or honest preparation for the exams. That's why we're pretty strict on that. Okay, then Diana, I think that's everything. Do you have anything else that you'd like to add or any tips for students who are currently [preparing for the IELTS exam](#)?

DIANA'S TIPS

Diana: Maybe if it's for the writing. In the beginning, I used to take maybe, I don't know, more than one hour for an essay, maybe two hours. So, in the end I was like how am I going to do this in time limit, but after you do a few like you take your time then it gets a bit easier if you put time-- but first I was I'm never going to do this in 40 minutes.

Ben: Yes, this is a really--

Diana: So, that's another problem in the exam; that time push. Yes, definitely.



Ben: Yes, this is a really good point that I will just mention before we finish is that **when you're starting with your preparation, it's perfectly okay to start and an hour two hours writing your essay because nobody can write in 40 minutes the first time they see it. It takes a while to gain this skill. So, if it takes you two hours, that's okay. Don't beat yourself up about it, but the next time you do the essay, try do it maybe in an hour and 45 minutes and then slowly but surely, bring the time down and aim for 40 minutes. I think your progress will speed up in getting the time down if you've got a system or formula to follow which helps things a lot when it comes to planning and writing the essay.** Well, thank you very much, Diana. It's been a pleasure.

Diana: It's all right. Thank you. Thanks for your help.

Ben: You're welcome. You're welcome and all the best with nursing. Good luck with that and good luck in your Australia adventure.

Diana: Great, Ben. Thank you. Keep up your good work. Thanks for your help in lots of students.

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