



**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

**Henry:** Hello, my name is Henry. I'm from Mongolia and at the moment I live in Australia and I took the IELTS to extend my visa in Australia. **So, I took [online course](#) from the IELTS podcast and then I'm really happy with Ben's service.**

**Ben:** Excellent, alright

**Henry:** Yes.

**Ben:** Thank you very much, Henry.

**Henry:** No worries, Ben.

**Ben:** Okay, so you want to extend your stay in Australia, correct?

**Henry:** Yes, that's right.

**Ben:** I see. Did you say you are a student at the moment?



**Henry:** No. I came to Australia to study for my Master's degree and I completed it last year. So, right now, I'm just living in Australia, working.

**Ben:** Interesting. May I ask what job you're doing?

**Henry:** Actually, my major is accounting, but currently I'm working in construction field. I work as a plan reader in a construction company, yes.

**Ben:** That's interesting. Wow! Okay. I'm curious. We're just going to go a bit off-topic now, but how did an accountant end up as a plan reader in a construction site?

**Henry:** Yes, it's interesting and also a long story.

**Ben:** Okay. Okay.

**Henry:** Yes.

**Ben:** All right, no worries. We'll talk about that another day. So, I guess you've taken the test a few times before, no, to get onto the Master's program.

**Henry:** Actually, the first test was TOEFL. I took the TOEFL IBT maybe so many years ago and then before this time, I took the IELTS last year also to extend my visa and then that time I hadn't got-- I didn't get any like the long period enough time to prepare it. I think I had only one or two weeks and I just familiarized myself with the IELTS structure and then like type of questions.



So, I really didn't prepare it, just familiarize myself and then I just did okay with my first attempt and then I extended my visa and then I had to take it again this year also saying for some reason and then this time I had like one month and half to prepare it and then I got a much better result this time.

**Ben:** Very interesting. I see. Could you tell us the results you got the first time, please?

**Henry:** Okay. So, I got a 6.5 that time and reading and listening is 6.5, speaking 7, writing 6.

**Ben:** Oh, I see. I see and this was just with like very minimum preparation and just basically familiarizing yourself with the exam.

**Henry:** Yes. I think my learning like my study in Master help with much about that. So, like without that, I couldn't get that high score. So, like that time I just finished complete my degree; like after I completed my degree, one week I took the exam. So, I was fresh that time. So, I think that's why I got the 6.5. Otherwise, IELTS is not easy test to take to get a good score.

**Ben:** Absolutely, but I know what you mean about being sort of like fresh because if you're writing and using the language every day, then-- and you've been like this for a good year or two and then you have to carry on using it in a test, it's much easier than if you had stopped writing and you've just been speaking and listening in English, for example, for the last year and then suddenly you've got to get writing again because I don't know about you, but when I'm



writing in a foreign language it can go rusty. The skills can get rusty unless you are constantly using them and maintaining them. Would you agree?

**Henry:** Yes, that's right. I totally agree with that.

### HENRY'S BIGGEST IELTS CHALLENGES

**Ben:** All right. What were the biggest challenges you had with the IELTS when you did do your test?

**Henry:** I see **my weakest points are writing and speaking, but you know people don't realize until they get valuable feedback like they don't know how well or bad they are performing in like a specific section. So, I got to find out like how bad is my writing when I got feedback first time and then I was also surprised like wow! This is it. So, like I see some light like I can improve my writing because I got the feedback and I know my mistakes and so it was quite shocking when I got the feedback first time.**

**Ben:** I see. I see. Are you talking about the feedback you got from our online course or from another--

**Henry:** Yes.



**Ben:** Okay.

**Henry:** No, no. I never took any other courses, so you are my first choice and yes, this is--

**Ben:** Got you. It's like a high school romance; the first love.

**Henry:** That's right.

**Ben:** Okay. I know you've been faithful then that's good to know.

**Henry:** Because--

**Ben:** I'm sorry.

**Henry:** Before I chose your course, I was listening your podcast for many months like for a long time, so like I thought myself if I take the IELTS again, I'm going to take the course from the IELTS podcast. So, that's why I didn't look for the different courses, so I just straight went to your services.

**Ben:** Got you. I understand. Okay, that's interesting and Henry, did you not get any feedback on your Master's course?

**Henry:** Actually, in Master, they don't tell you about the grammars and structure things. Only thing is like the content of it. You have to-- it should have include this kind of information or like something like this, not like grammar-wise English-wise. Actually, I started learning English by myself. Never taught English by any teacher, so like grammar is my big weakness because like I



studied only the essential grammar in use and intermediate and something like-- I did these books by myself. That's all the grammar I know.

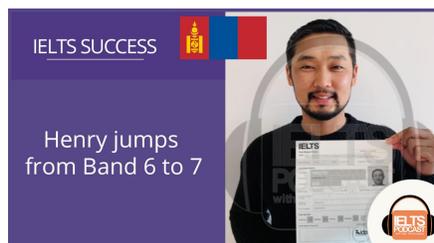
**Ben:** Interesting, very interesting and just to dig into this a little bit deeper, so you got the feedback and then you knew which areas to work on and you studied those specific areas. Is that right?

**Henry:** Yes, that's correct. Yes.



## HOW HENRY IMPROVED USING FEEDBACK

**Ben:** Got you and so once you had these areas identified because before you had no idea and once the essay correctors had identified them, how did you go about improving? What steps did you take?



**Henry:** First of all, my biggest mistake was articles. So, like I never know there is some kind of like specific rules for that. I just learn like observation-- like through the observation, not through the like grammar or the specific rules. So, I started learning from Internet, so how to use, how to master articles in essay writing, something like this. So, I try to apply this new knowledge to my next answers. So, this is how I improve my writing like grammar-wise.

**Ben:** I see. Did you use English Grammar in Use? You said you used the Internet. Did you just go online and then just put something like how to use articles ESL or something like that?

**Henry:** Actually, the Grammar in Use is like I used it when I started learning English, not currently but I think you also included in your online course about some links, about the articles and grammar things. So, I go through this link and then I think in British Council or something very reliable sources and then a lot of like tests and examples. So, I learned much from that source as well.

**Ben:** Excellent point there. Excellent point because we can-- in the course, we can definitely identify your errors and we can give you help to improve them especially when it is IELTS related. If we can or if there is time, we will explain the grammar as well, but more often than not, it's a good step to take to do exactly what Henry did and that is to research online because we can tell you the rule maybe in about 30 seconds, but that doesn't mean that you're going to integrate it and internalize it and use it perfectly the next time.



To get to using it perfectly the next time, you have to do-- I'd strongly recommend you do what Henry did, which is to research online, find reliable sources and then do-- I guess you were doing like online tests just to test your knowledge and looking for examples just to confirm and really just sort of internalize what you'd learned? Would you agree?

**Henry:** Yes. Yes, yes, yes. That's right.

**Ben:** Super. So, let's move on to the next point. What was your biggest challenge before you joined the online course? What was your biggest challenge with IELTS?

**Henry:** **Biggest challenge was--** I think it was like listening the answer and then writing the answer at the same time like in a [listening section](#), I'm listening the speaker also I'm also reading the questions then I have to write down the answers while I am listening. That's was my biggest challenge.

**Ben:** Interesting. Tell us, how did you solve this?

**Henry:** The only solution for this problem is practice. So, I found-- you know the word like practice makes perfect?

**Ben:** Exactly.

**Henry:** So, this is the only solution. Yes, you have to practice every day.

**Ben:** Right and where did you get your practice tests from?



**Henry:** I bought [Cambridge book](#) from number 1-12 I guess. I only focused on that book because I think this is the most reliable source for the preparation.

**Ben:** Another good point there about using reliable sources. So, you worked through the whole book and you did practice test after practice test.

**Henry:** Yes, that's right.

**Ben:** Interesting, interesting. Now then, with the writing, would you say grammar was your biggest issue? What about like planning the essay or thinking of ideas or like timing? Any other issues you had with regards to that?

**Henry:** Yes. I think writing as a whole is big issue for me. That's right. These are all included there like timing. Also, you know the planning like I never planned my essay for my first attempt, so I just learned it for my second attempt and then it was like the essential thing to do in writing in order to get a higher score and like idea generation also is very important. Yes and I think the writing is very big issue for me.

**Ben:** So, you would say planning was an issue.

**Henry:** Yes.

**Ben:** And idea generation.

**Henry:** Yes.



**Ben:** Okay.

**Henry:** So, I think it's all related to each other. If you can't generate enough idea or correct idea, it takes a lot of time so you cannot finish your essay in time. So, it's all related to each other. So, the writing is like very difficult. I think is very difficult for many students, not only for me. It's very common.

**Ben:** Oh, yes. It absolutely is one of the biggest pain points for IELTS students and a few weeks ago, we had an interview and a girl was telling us how she generates ideas and in the course as well. This is why we've got two important chapters about generating ideas and a system for generating ideas which you'd then drop into your plan which you then sort of like use the-- drop into the framework. Is that what you did, Henry?

**Henry:** Yes, yes and the [C2 template](#) helps me a lot. So, I just practiced this template for any type of questions; just a little bit shifting it into the different style and then I just practiced it.

**Ben:** You said shifting it; like adapting it, yes?

**Henry:** Yes. Adapting it to different question types.

**Ben:** Got you. Got you. Okay, super. You found that that worked for you on the test day, correct?

**Henry:** Yes, yes. This is the main thing that helped me to get my desired score.



**Ben:** Got you. What score did you need?

**Henry:** I need to have at least 7 in writing.

<b>HENRY'S SCORES</b>
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**Ben:** Okay, right and then can you tell us what score you got overall?

**Henry:** Overall, I got **7.5 this time** and then I increased my writing from 6 to 7; one whole band score.

**Ben:** Super.

**Henry:** So, it was amazing.

**Ben:** Absolutely. Well done. Well done, Henry.

**Henry:** Thank you.

**Ben:** What about your other scores from your other results-- from your other tests?



**Henry:** Yes, I also increased a lot. Like in reading, I got 7.-- no 8. I got 8 in reading and then 7.5 in listening and speaking 7. Only speaking stay same. You know, I didn't prepare for the speaking.

**Ben:** Got you. Got you. You left speaking because you're using it every day. Is that right?

**Henry:** Yes, almost, but you know in Australia we have a small community, so I work with people from the same country. So, I speak in Mongolia when I'm working so like there is not that much interaction with English speaker here as well. So, it's also hard to practice English. People think like if I live in Australia they think like I am very fluent and then like every day speaking someone who is native speakers something like this, but it's all different here.

**Ben:** I'm guilty of exactly the same. Like at the moment, I'm living in Poland and I can survive perfectly well without having to speak Polish. Even in the supermarkets, it's self-service. So, I not interacting with anybody and then at the restaurants, I'm speaking English and they understand. It's quite easy to get around without speaking the language. What about in your Masters? Were you not speaking all the time while interacting with the others?

**Henry:** Yes, I speak in English when I'm at university, but I only go to school twice a week; two days a week, so it's not enough to take my English to a high level. That's why I always listen to the podcast on the way to my work because it takes like one hour each way so like two hours I've got. So, I always listen to the podcast; your podcast and also the BBC News and 99% Invisible. This is the podcast that I think one of the student who were in your podcast



mentioned this podcast. So, I just searched on the internet and found the 99% Invisible. This is a really nice podcast.

**Ben:** Tell me about that. I can't remember exactly what it is about.

**Henry:** It's about like many different topics, any topics, but they explain and do some research about the topic and like very interesting. I think the one of your student who is a doctor in Australia I think mentioned this one.

**Ben:** Okay. I vaguely remember now. I think so. So, they go into a topic, they explain it like what would be a topic, for example? I don't know like marine life in Fiji or something like that or?

**Henry:** Not that big topic, just the normal things like interesting facts. Some statue, why the statue is there, and then what is happening in the society because of the statue; something like this. Very interesting facts all around the world, not only scientific things. So, just normal life and very interesting.

**Ben:** Excellent and did that help you when you were thinking of ideas for your essays?

**Henry:** Yes, I would say like more help me for my listening because I always listening and then like if you listen like spending a lot of time listening to English podcast, you will turn-- like your brain turn to English, like thinking in English. So, it helped me a lot listen and also maybe for my speaking as well.



**Ben:** Very interesting. Very interesting. Good points there. Good points. Okay. So, we are coming to the end of the test-- end of the interview. You've done your test. Now, do you have any of other tips-- no. What would you say to somebody who is on the fence and thinking about joining the online course?

**Henry:** Okay. I highly recommend the [IELTS podcast services](#); [online courses](#) also the [essay correction services](#) because I got the score that I wanted through their help and also very good-- you will get a very valuable feedback on your answers and then you will improve your score in very short time. So, I definitely recommend this online course.

#### HENRY'S TIPS FOR IELTS STUDENTS

**Ben:** Thank you very much for that, Henry. Thank you. I think we are now near the end of the recording. Just one last thing; do you have any other tips for students for the IELTS?

**Henry:** Yes. I've got one. **The first is like practice makes perfect. You have to practice and like any skill you need to improve, you have to practice every day. This is the most important. Secondly, [get feedback](#). This is another very effective way to improve your score in a very short time and you will save a lot of time and a lot of money and then it's like the two main things to get the good score in IELTS.**



**Ben:** Absolutely. I love that advice because it's quite easy to think okay, I'm going to buy a book, I'm going to buy a course, I'm going to go to some classes, and then I'll pass IELTS. It doesn't work like that. You've got to do those things, but actually use them and put in the time, the effort, the energy and not only [get the feedback](#) but take action after getting the feedback as well.

**Henry:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ben:** Yes. I'm glad we're on the same page with that, Henry. Okay. So, thank you very much, Henry. It's been a pleasure talking with you.

**Henry:** Yes, thank you so much. I'm really appreciate you invited me for this podcast. So, good luck with your-- all the students for IELTS preparation and then thank you for your help.

**Ben:** You're welcome, Henry. It's been a pleasure and good luck in extending your stay in Australia and I hope you end up being an accountant if that's what you want, I guess. Is that what you want to do at the end of the day?

**Henry:** Yes, I haven't decided yet, but thank you anyway.

**Ben:** No worries.

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