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**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:** Hi, there and welcome to IELTS podcast. **In this tutorial, we are going to be talking with Rohan from India who got some very high scores in the IELTS exam.** So, could you please introduce yourself, Rohan, and tell us where you're from and why you are taking the IELTS exam.

**Rohan:** Hello, Ben. This is Rohan here from Mumbai, India. So, my actual purpose was to get immigrated to Canada for some kind of work because that's what I am looking out for for my near future and for that IELTS is one of the important examination.

I've been doing this examination for quite some time now, but I was very skeptical about the [writing part](#) because I was not getting the exact grades which I needed as per my age and that is how I came up to IELTS podcast.



It was just a small Google search about IELTS examination and I searched for-- I mean I looked on to this website for [IELTS podcast](#). I just went through some of your [articles](#) or let's say the essays that had been written by maybe some of your colleagues or maybe students, but I liked them and I started digging deep and what I did is then I thought it's better if I take some guidance by choosing one of the courses.

So, I first took a sample [guidance course](#) you can say where I wrote an essay and that was being reviewed. So firstly, I liked the review because honestly, I had also tried another website which also gave me a lot of greats and asked me how I can repair this, but the best part about IELTS podcast was that you provide a video where I can go through it that you know what is wrong, what is right, and what should be improved.

So, I was really impressed by that. That is when I decided I should go for a course which is [unintelligible 00:02:25.08] and then I can do a couple of essays which will help me improve and finally, at the end of the day, it has helped me.

**Ben:** Excellent, okay. Super. Thank you very much for that, Rohan. Yes, just to expand on that for the students listening, what happens is you send-- we give you a question, you type out your answer, you send it in, and then we make a video of us correcting it, going through it,



reading it and it works really well and a lot of students find that they improve quite quickly with this type of feedback except the other day.

A student who was deaf bought this essay correction and so yes, it wasn't that much use for her because she couldn't hear the corrections, unfortunately. There are captions probably on the YouTube video. However-- yes, I offered her a refund. So, for like 99% of the people, they find it very valuable.

So, anyway, Rohan, can you tell me the specific problem-- Well, no. Before we jump into that, you said you took IELTS a few times before. You were preparing for IELTS for quite a while. How many tests did you take beforehand?

**Rohan:** I think before IELTS podcast, I think maybe if I remember that correctly, I think it was three or four times.

**Ben:** Wow! Okay, and how were you preparing for the writing before?

**Rohan:** I think I was just doing some random essay writing so as to use and choose topics. So, I knew the formats of various topics like agree-disagree and various other topics. So, I knew about the topics, so I used to practice them one by one, but I think these were the small



nuances in each of the essays which I think I was missing somewhere and that is why I needed some guidance.

**Ben:** Okay interesting, interesting. So, the specific problem that you were looking to solve with the writing was like how to construct an essay would you say or was it something else?

**Rohan:** I think I'll go a bit back on this question because when I started with IELTS podcast, I actually came to know what are my problems because that's what happened with me when I started seeing the reviews. I understood what the problems are. Otherwise, if you just practice writing your essays, you'll always feel that you're writing it in the correct manner because that is what I did even at the examinations, but when the [review happened through the videos](#), I came to know where I'm going wrong.

So, to give you a couple of examples on this one there was a review which talked about that if you are mentioning some points which is a fact or something, maybe you can give some relevant examples to it. So, that was one thing. Secondly, the correct usage of particles and thirdly, I think the overall construct of the number of ideas that you're trying to put in. It has to gel with one another from start to the end. So, I think these were two or three things which I was missing and which [IELTS podcast](#) helped me and... yes.



**Ben:** Yes, yes. It's surprising like I see essays every single day and what you said about getting the points to work together or to gel together, as you said, yes, that's like the ability to write cohesively so it all connects with each other and then giving examples to the points you make, that's building your arguments and as you said very correctly, that all has to gel together. It all has to be [cohesive](#).

What I want to zoom in on is the use of articles because I see this day-in-day-out; students struggling with this specific area. In your case, the team-- our team of essay correctors, they identified that this was an issue for you. So, this was part of the problem solved and then how did you work on this? How did you improve this?

**Rohan:** I think more than any problem they highlighted that maybe you can make lesser use of the articles because this is also one of the tutorial videos that IELTS podcast provides. So, to give you an example, let's say most of the times when I used to write an essay, I used to use the article or let's say the word 'the' most of the times while writing some simple sentences.

### ROHAN SHARES WHAT HE LEARNED THROUGH IELTS PODCAST



Through IELTS podcast, I came to know let's say that for some of these sentences we can use plurals where we don't need to use the word the. You can construct sentences in a way that you don't need articles, but you can present beautifully. So, it's more presenting it in different ways so even the examiner knows that you know different kind of sentences; maybe complex, compound, etc. and try to use the articles in or do some lesser usage of the articles. Not that we just need to vanish them totally but don't try to repeat it too much.

**Ben:** Yes, that's excellent. Yes, that's an excellent point and to be honest, I had forgotten about these sort of like the ways we teach in the course on how to sidestep the use of articles because like you say, of course, we do need to use them in the essay, but there are a variety of sentences we can use and a variety of different techniques we can use so that we can avoid it and then we decrease the chances of mistakes.

As you said, changing the sentences to plurals is definitely-- I remember it's definitely a good way forward because you just reduce the opportunity for error and it's grammatically just as good as the sentence with articles, but without the mistakes. So, excellent point there. Excellent point.

Now, so you said you had essay corrections beforehand, yes? You had essay corrections with other services. Why didn't you carry on with those other services?



**Rohan:** I think [unintelligible 00:09:03.19] so, I had taken a survey guidance or let's say survey article review or the [essay review](#) for both the websites, that is the other website and for yours. I wouldn't say that the other one was not too good. It was quite good in terms of the oral report that they are provided, but as I said, I liked the video format.

I felt as if it was more of a person that you are talking to because when a video starts, you try to relate to it because someone is talking to you about the different problems that you've created in the essay and then how do you need to improve it more than a report is something that you're just reading something and you also need to improve on that. So, you don't know where you need to improve.

Part of the videos when I came to know the issue, I also had some email support. So, if I had a question, I was able to ask that person; the dedicated person who was able to help me from start till end. So, I think it was a more personal experience for me overall.

**Ben:** Yes, yes that's a good point. I always try to explain it. It's like a teacher looking over your shoulder while you're writing your work or while you're preparing whereas if you get the PDF, it can be copy-paste because a lot of students have problems with articles. So, you can just write a copy-paste sentence just saying okay, you need to improve the use of articles. Check out



these resources. Copy-paste and that's the same for Rohan, for Mark, for David, for anybody. You just copy-paste that.

Also, I was looking at some essay corrections some Chinese students sent me and I even saw some grammatical mistakes or some phrases that the teacher had given to them that wasn't even like native English speaker. So, I think a lot of these services it's not corrected by-- well, you cannot be 100% certain that is corrected by a native English speaker whereas ours you hear the person and it's pretty obvious you can.

So, anyway moving on. Now, let's move on from the writing and let's talk about the other areas. So, what were your scores in listening and reading, for example?

**Rohan:** So, for [listening](#), I had 8.5.

**Ben:** Wow!

**Rohan:** For [reading](#) again, I think yes, it was 8.5.

**Ben:** Wow! How did you get those scores, Rohan? That's crazy.



### HOW ROHAN GOT HIS HIGH SCORES

**Rohan:** I think it was just self-practice. For reading, I just kept on practicing the book specifically that IELTS provides you. So, I just went through all the chapters. I tried to do the reading practices, some of the reading things on IELTS podcast and same for listening. I think practice is the key for it. I just kept practicing.

I think for listening the thing is that you need to understand the accent, firstly. Some part of my work also contains a lot of international calls, so that helped me in a way to understand the accents and keep on going with the listening part, try to understand small things within whatever the overall exercise is going on with the listening and mark the correct answers there. So, I think yes, practice helped me there.

**Ben:** Interesting, interesting. A good point there that you mentioned is that you said you're on the phone all the time with your work listening to different accents? Is that correct?



**Rohan:** Yes, I wouldn't say all the time, but you can say most of my period has been being in touch with let's say some of the European nations. So, I could understand the accents there which helped me somewhere.

**Ben:** Yes, which country-- which European country was the most difficult to understand?

**Rohan:** I wouldn't say any countries or difficult to understand. I think everyone has their own accent because-- I can give an example that sometimes even people can feel that people from India have a different accent and it's difficult to understand. So, I wouldn't say it's difficult, but you know just people have different accents and that's it.

**Ben:** Fair enough. Okay, okay. That's a very diplomatic answer there, Rohan. You can tell you've got experience on the phone, yes. I would be tempted just to jump in with both feet and say these people or these people, but yes.

**Rohan:** I would say I love all these people. I work with them, so I won't hurt anyone. So, it has been a good experience.

**Ben:** Good, good, good; much more diplomatic than myself. I think I've got the diplomacy of a bulldozer sometimes, but anyway, let's move on. So, you were doing plenty of-- well, you've got not only with the listening, you've got plenty of listening experience through your work and lots



of communication speaking experience as well and plus what I find that when you're on the phone with another person and you don't have the visual clues, you know you can't see the facial expressions, you can't read their lips, you can't watch their arms, you can't see their body, I find it's sort of like the next level of communication because then it's purely just auditory. Would you agree?

**Rohan:** I would agree to that because the only point of communication is your voice, so you need to be very careful about what you're speaking and what you are listening at the same time.

**Ben:** Exactly, yes. Exactly. I remember when-- because, as you know, I'm from England, but when I was in Spain and then I started communicating, I had to communicate on the phone sometimes and it was really taxing and I realized I've got to step it up a little bit. So, yes, yes. It's probably good training. So, you did-- not only did you have this experience from your work but also you said you did practice tests. Is that right?

**Rohan:** Yes.

**Ben:** Yes, okay. Where did you get the practice tests from?



**Rohan:** Some of them I would say IELTS podcast, but to be honest there was also a website which is I think if I'm not wrong it's [ieltonlinetest.com](http://ieltonlinetest.com), which has all these tests uploaded online. So, you can just randomly go and they have whole lot of tests there, not only for listening but also reading and writing and all of them for IELTS. So, most of the listening one I chose from them-- I took up from them and the rest of the ones which are already there in the IELTS book which is the IELTS 12 book which I was referring to, so the four tests out of them. So, I think that was enough to practice.

**Ben:** Excellent, excellent and in your test, which you just recently completed, do you remember the accent that you had to listen to in your listening test?

**Rohan:** I don't exactly remember, but just to go back, I think it was more of a UK accent if I'm not wrong actually.

**Ben:** Okay. Cool, cool, just out of curiosity because it says on the official site it's going to be a range of accents. It could be any accent from an English-speaking country, but from my understanding, a lot of the times it's the British accent even though they say it could be Canadian, it could be Australian, Kiwi, whatever, but from my understanding, it's usually British. Right then-- now then, in the speaking, what was your score in the speaking?



**Rohan:** [Speaking](#) I had 7.5.

**Ben:** Oh, good, good. Was it a comfortable test? Was it an easy experience or was it stressful and horrible?

**Rohan:** I wouldn't say too much of stress there because I already had a couple of tests done for speaking as I mentioned previously. So, I was quite cool, but I think it was an okay-okay test. I think I could have scored more maybe if I could have practiced more, but I think I'm satisfied with whatever score I got on speaking. So, it was quite okay.

**Ben:** Excellent. Okay. So, you said you had done the test three times before. Each time were your scores like pretty high for the listening, for the reading or for the speaking?

**Rohan:** I think reading has been good from the start. Listening I think I progressed over the period of time. The first one wasn't too good, but I think the second, third, fourth, and even the final one which I gave it was quite good. The same goes for speaking. Speaking was good from the start. It was only with writing that I was not able to progress.

**Ben:** I see. What were your previous scores in the writing?



**Rohan:** I think it was stuck at 6.5 from start itself. I was just not able to go ahead. So, you can say my life was full of stress only for 0.5 and I realized what 0.5 can do to your life.

**Ben:** Yes. Wow! That's a very good way of putting it. That 0.5, it has such a massive impact, doesn't it?

**Rohan:** Exactly. When I started watching some motivational videos and where I saw that there are athletes who are failing even 0.21, so I think that 0.5 was too much and I need to start working harder. That is where the IELTS podcast help me.

#### ROHAN WATCHED MOTIVATIONAL VIDEOS TO SUCCEED

**Ben:** Wow! Wow! Let's zoom in on this. Let's focus on this a bit. So, you watched some sort of like motivational videos on YouTube and they were talking about athletes.

**Rohan:** Yes, exactly. I think-- **these were like most of the accidental videos I would say that I accidentally came across these videos because I was just watching some random stuff, so I just thought let's see what this video says and that is where I saw that if you see some of the histories of some of the athletes, they are losing by point few seconds and something and**



then they have to work for the whole year again and come back to another event or something to again test and try themselves, but at least in IELTS, you can just go back and give your exam the very next month or very next few days. *So, we have been luckier to do this. The only key is keep working harder.*

**Ben:** Very interesting viewpoint and I would totally agree with it and I know exactly what you mean like in Formula 1 with the race cars, it's hundredths of a second and they only get something like 21 races a year or per season and they've got one chance or 21 chances basically. The margins are so small, but yet it has such a massive impact.

Yes, like you said, IELTS is a similar game. Obviously, we're not professional athletic levels, but the margins are still pretty small except you've got the opportunity to go back and back again and do it or as you've done, get professional help first and then come back and then walk away with that 7. So, yes. Well done there, Rohan. That's a very-- yes. Well done and I'm pleased that you took that route; that you compared yourself and you said look, if these athletes have got it, then I surely can do it, no? Would you agree that was your thinking at the time?

**Rohan:** Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.



**Ben:** Got you. That's what I understood. So, finally it's my last question on; what would you say to anyone sitting on the fence right now about whether to join, whether to start with IELTS podcast with the sentence guide-- with the [online course](#)?

**Rohan:** I would say that for anyone who is sitting on the fence and struggling with any of the part be listening, writing, reading specifically for writing because I had a great experience with IELTS podcast, I would say that even before you go for your next test because there's a certain fee that IELTS charges for and it's a whole big good amount.

So, even before you go for that, I think you need to look into what are your problems, study them clearly, practice it, take some [professional help from IELTS podcast](#) because I had a good experience with them and then only go for the next exam because then you won't need to do a couple of trials. In your very next trial, I am sure that you should be able to score some good grades and that would be my solution or advice to these people.

**IELTS CASINO**



**Ben:** Excellent. Excellent point, yes. I think a lot of students they get tied up in what I call like the [IELTS casino](#) where it's test after test after test hoping for a different grade whereas, yes, it's much wiser to do practice tests, get some professional help, find out where you are and then once you're confident that you're at a certain level, then put in for a test after you've received the guidance and you've improved and you've got the feedback and everything like that.

So, Rohan, last question. Promise. You said you've applied for Canada; whereabouts in Canada and what position are you hoping to do?

**Rohan:** To be honest, I am still working out with this thing with a couple of my colleagues or friends or someone who is trying to help me professionally. So, I'm still planning on that. I don't have a right answer to it right now.

**Ben:** Okay, okay, but it's definitely going to be Canada though.

**Rohan:** Yes, that's what I'm looking out for.

**Ben:** Got you. Got you and is there any city specifically that you'd like to go to?



**Rohan:** I'm not sure. There are one or two of my friends there and I think they are [unintelligible 00:23:20.29], but I just read about it online so maybe that's one of them on the list, but I'm still figuring out what could be the other possible options.

**Ben:** Interesting, yes, interesting. I know one or two people that they applied for places way out in the sticks, so to speak. Just like way out in the countryside where there's hardly anybody because nobody was applying there and the doors were open because that county or state was pretty much just a province. That's it. That province was just empty and so the doors were open, but anyway, yes, that's another point.

So, well done, Rohan, for getting the scores you wanted and yes, and thank you very much for doing this interview with us and I hope-- and I'm pretty certain you will have inspired a lot of students to take action and also just to remember that you only fail if you give in. You've just got to keep at it, keep trying, keep working hard and eventually, you will get there just like Rohan did. Is that right, Rohan?

**Rohan:** Absolutely [unintelligible 00:24:34.12].

[Music]

IELTS SUCCESS

His 6.5 blocked him going to Canada

