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INTRODUCTION

Daphne: Hello, IELTS students. Thank you for choosing to listen to this tutorial from ieltspodcast.com. My name is Daphne and today I'm going to focus on Task 1 map questions which like the process diagrams or flowcharts are a bit more unusual, but nevertheless, it's really important to be able to answer them and to have had a bit of practice before your exam.

So today, we're going to do three things. We're going to look at a Task 1 map question from our great ieltspodcast.com course using two students' essays and seeing why one scored a band 7.5 and the other scored a band 6 and we'll look at another task map question from a coursebook and see how we could answer this one and then I want to give you lots of really



useful and important vocab, which is crucial that's to say it's really important for successfully answering these questions in your exam.

LOOKING AT TASK 1 MAP QUESTION

Okay. So, here we go. On the website that goes with this, you'll be able to see all the diagrams. So, have a look at these as this will help you to understand and visualize what I'm talking about. So, to guide you, I've color-coded my corrections and recommendations to make sure that they correspond really easily to the band grades we're talking about.

As you know, there are **four areas of assessment**. So, top comments I make to do with task achievement I'm going to mark in red, coherence and cohesion blue, lexical resource green, grammatical range and accuracy purple.

So, if you haven't yet come across a Task 1 map question, they usually consist of two maps which might be of a landscape or island or a town one before and one after some kind of change and the question rubric asks you to summarize the information by selecting and



reporting the main features and make comparisons where necessary and like other Task 1s, the guide suggests 20 minutes of time to write at least 150 words.

So, the one we're going to look at is the map question which is part of our Writing Course and you can find more about that on the ieltspodcast.com website. [The Writing Course](#) is brilliant. We see our students making great improvements with all parts of their Writing Task 1 and Task 2 getting lots of practice on these different questions.

So, on this image, there are two almost rectangular islands before and after some development work. On the first one, we can see a beach on the western side and then only nine trees or wooded areas scattered around the island; some on the northwestern corner, some on the northeastern coast, and others located to the south.

In the after picture, there are some accommodation blocks. These are labeled accommodation blocks on the diagram on the western side, three larger independent buildings in the center and next to further accommodation blocks in a circular shape on the right-hand side of the map is a lake. Footpaths and a vehicle track link the new buildings to a newly developed pier. So, a pier sticks out into the sea and there are a few sailing boats in the sea.



So, you can hear if you're listening carefully I'm already using quite specific language to describe directions. This is really important. You are going to need this in this kind of task: on the left-hand side or western side, in the northwestern corner, to the south, in the center, to the east of and so on. So, make sure you're happy about directions: the north, south, east, west and then the more specific northwest, southeast, and so on. Also, note in English, we write these directions without a capital letter. They can work as adjectives, so in the southwestern corner or as a noun simply in the northeast.

HOW DO WE START WITH THESE QUESTIONS?

So, how do we start with these questions? So, quite simply, the same way as I recommend you start with a pie chart or a line graph, you take a pencil and you circle the significant differences between the two images. Look for clues and in this map, there are two or three huge clues which many students miss or don't really think about what the clues are kind of saying before they start.



So, the clues here are really important to answering the task correctly. The first clue; if there is one, look at the scale. This is the clue to how big the island really is. Now, this island is actually really small. It's only about 500 meters or half a kilometer long and this must give us a clue as to what kind of development has taken place. It is far more likely to be a holiday resort than a large new urban town. Now, any kind of questions I read, any responses I read that talk to me about urban regeneration, no. It definitely could not be that on such a small island. Also, it has no roads. That would be a problem.

Other clues are in the labels. So, look carefully. If you're given any labels, look at these really carefully, too. Words like accommodation and footpath are more likely to be associated to a hotel or resort than a big new town. Finally, the drawing of the two sailing boats in the after picture also add to the idea of this being a holiday resort.

LOOKING AT STUDENT'S ESSAYS

So, let's look at these two students' essays and see how they answered this question. So, the first one which is graded around about a band 6 starts: The illustration shows a piece of land



before and after it went through a process of civilization, okay, while the second one which is more like a band 7 7.5 begins: The two maps represent a plan of construction for a new resort on a previously undeveloped Island.

So immediately, you can see which one gives me more information and the second one is making some things very clear. The student looked at the scale, assumed the changes are part of a resort development and told me the island was previously underdeveloped. So, these observations will help score highly for task achievement.

The first one talks about a process of civilization, which is not wrong, but it doesn't sound very natural. The overall sentences look like this. The first one says: Overall, there are significant changes can be found. So, we should correct that. Significant changes can be found in the island particularly the new accommodation facilities, public buildings at the center, and sea transportation at the southern part.

So, let's look at this in more detail. Significant-- we like that word. So, they talk about significant changes can be found-- so, nice passive voice; that's great-- new accommodation-- yes, fine that's labeled, so we know what that is. Public buildings-- I'm not sure about this. So, for me, a public building is like a library or a museum; it's something big. Sea transportation-- again, not



sure. There's a picture of two small sailing boats whereas sea transportation is suggesting to me a big cargo ship.

So, I don't think the students really understood the scale of the map and because of this, their understanding of the changes isn't right. This would impact on task achievement. There's some language used for directions; at the center and at the southern part, but the wrong preposition. So, we would say in the center and in the south of the island.

So, the second essay reads: Overall, the resort will be built all over the islands and will include a hotel, a reception, houses, an artificial lake, and a pier. Now, you may notice here that there is the future passive voice. This is quite unusual. It runs throughout this essay. It's been done very well. It's correct all the way through.

Personally however, I'm not sure about the use of the future here, but in the first sentence, the student has already suggested that the maps were a plan of construction, which would suggest a future idea. Imagine that there were two architects looking at maps. So, that's why they're using the future voice here.



I think it would have been better to use the present **perfect passive** followed by the present tense. So, my sentence would read: Overall, the island has been transformed into a new resort which includes-- and then you could say your hotel, your reception, whatever.

Okay. So, let's look at the first essay again. This is the next paragraph. The piece of land presented has a wide seashore with only about a fifth of its borders tied to land. During the process of civilization the area went through, the vegetation there was reduced extraordinarily and both residences and buildings of social use were built; one of them being a pier in order to make use of the territory shore. Another noticeable change was the appearance of a lake.

Right. So, there's some good stuff here. Nice passive verbs; vegetation was reduced, residences were built and some good lexical phrases; so a fifth of its borders tied to land, during the process of civilization, one of them being a pier, in order to make blah, blah, blah, okay? So, there's some nice stuff going on there. However, my biggest problem is how this relates to the actual picture.

So, because this is an island, none of it is connected to land. An island is not connected to land. So, in terms of coherence and lexis, we wouldn't talk about buildings of social use, but we'd probably say residential buildings and I'm not sure about-- for me that the process of civilization



sounds more like evolution; like how man came into being. So, I would prefer to say the development phase something like that or the development stage.

So, there are problems there relating to the [coherence](#) and also obviously to the task achievement although there is some good stuff there, too. So, the second essay for me is much more concise and precise and I think from this, you could probably draw the map, which is always a test. If you can draw the map, then that's good without even looking at it.

So, the island is about 200 meters long and 800 meters wide. It is surrounded by the sea and with a beach on the west side. There are also some trees at various places close to the coast. According to the new plan, there will be a hotel with a reception and one more facility building in the center of the island and on both sides of the hotel, there will be placed houses as accommodation for guests.

So, there's confident use here of the present passive voice: it is surrounded by the sea, a hotel will be placed and I like the fact that the student is giving me a size of the island and used vocabulary relating to resorts. So, nice in lexical range here: hotel, reception, facility building, accommodation for guests.



So, this all works well with the assumption that the changes are part of a new resort and showing me the size of the island immediately reassures me the student aha! They've looked at the information they've been given. They're using that information to make some realistic assumptions.

The first essay-- back to the first essay then. The final paragraph reads like this: The town as it presents itself after all the modifications, displays three main buildings at its center and two formations of the house accommodations; one on each side. There are two different kinds of paths in the land's disposition; a footpath and a vehicle track that connect all main areas and enable the citizens' mobility.

Okay. So, although there are no major grammatical errors here, there is still the problem that the construction work is clearly not a town and I think the students, therefore, miss the opportunity to use some key vocab for adding geographical positioning. So, we could have had to the southwest, accommodation blocks have been built, on the far eastern shore, a lake has been created.

Also, the tense running through this, they've just used the simple present and I think these tasks are like the process diagrams as well shouts at you use the passive tense, so passive voice.



It is the best opportunity to show off your passive, which is really, really important and that gets you good points for grammatical range and accuracy.

So, the second essay, the band 7 final paragraph is as follows: The hotel, the reception, and the facility building will be connected by a vehicle track while between the houses there will be footpaths. On the southern coast, a pier will be placed to provide a safe port for sailing boats. There is also a plan to create an artificial lake on the east end of the island. Comparing to the initial-- so, compared to it should be-- the initial look of the island, only the beach and some trees will be in the same place while the general prospects to the island will change significantly.

Okay. So, I'm sure you agree this is much more coherent and all in all, a very good response. There's some great vocab which is just what we need. We're talking about useful vocab for this kind of task: connected by, placed, positioned, create, change significantly. I love the word significantly. So, for me, that's a great word.

Grammatically, the student continues with the future passive. That's how they've started, so at least they're consistent going all the way through and use some good connecting words; while-- really useful connecting word. You've heard us say that before and also compared to obviously



because they're comparing the first picture before the development and then the second picture. Okay. So, hopefully, that's given you an idea there for that kind of map question; what to do and what to watch out for.

Let's have a look now at a different kind of map question. This image is taken from the coursebook called *Ready for IELTS* published by Mellon Exams and here they're two maps dated 2000 and 2009 representing changes in a town. It clearly gives the name of the town, which is Lakeside. So, let me read you a few sentences from the sample answer which is given to this question just to illustrate some useful vocab for this kind of task. So firstly, the residential neighborhood in the southwest of the town was transformed into a shopping center and the industrial complex expanded to replace the wooded area in the southeast.

Okay. That's a pretty intense sentence. So, the response is using some of the labels given. So, it's quite clearly labeled this map and it's okay. The labels are there to help you. You can do that, but it also uses some really good vocabulary for describing change and some very good passive verbs and geographical lexis as well.



So, you can see that the southwest of the town was transformed-- so nice geographical and nice passive and again, industrial complex expanded to replace the wooded area in the southeast. So, every single word there is doing a really good job.

Another sentence-- let me give you an example. The old town and derelict warehouse in the north were knocked down and replaced by a car park and the construction of some offices. So, the old town and derelict warehouse really useful adjectives there. Derelict means not used anymore, abandoned-- in the north were knocked down and replaced by. So, you've got nice phrasal verb there-- knocked down in the passive and replaced by.

Watch out for these prepositions-- replaced by-- really important-- expanded to. Always learn the preposition with the verb-- and construction of some offices, okay? So, there's some good stuff in that one. Have a look at the picture. Maybe you can see if you can write your own response to that using some of the words that we're using here-- we're mentioning.

I want to just sum up this tutorial here by giving you some really useful words and some vocab which you could use for these questions. So, if you're not happy with this vocab, make a note of it because it is really, really important. I would suggest verbs such as transformed into. So, watch out for the prepositions here. Replaced by, developed, expanded-- so, we can have



expand into, something like that-- construct, demolish, extend, and become. These are all really, really good verbs here.

Now, if you like playing with words like transformation, you will know that as an extra bonus these can all be transformed into nouns. So, you can have development, construction, demolition, extension, expansion, and so on. So, that makes these words super flexible and will show a great lexical range. You're showing the examiner you can manipulate these words from a verb to a noun even as an adjective some of them. So, that's really, really helpful.

You can also use some expressions; so, built in place of, turned into, built on the site of, reconstructed to become, and other really useful expressions. So, these are nice collocations here: urban transformation, urban renewal, or urban regeneration. Not only is this quite good vocab for the Task 1 maps it's also really useful for your Task 2 essays as well especially if you're writing about towns or anything to do with that.

So, there we have it. We have looked at a band 6 type Task 1 map essay and compared this to a band 7 map essay. We've also looked at another type of map question; the one about towns



and reviewed some core vocabulary which I think is needed for this kind of question. So, I hope you found this useful.

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So, the Writing Course which is really really good-- I mentioned that before-- can help you with your Task 2, your Task 1, give you lots of feedback personalized to you, lots of essay corrections and examples of different types of question.

If you have a friend who's also working towards IELTS and finding it hard, do share this podcast with them. Good luck to all of you with your preparation and talk to you soon. Thanks for listening.



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