



IELTS WRITING

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[Music]

INTRODUCTION

[Music]

Ben: Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we are going to continue with essential grammar for IELTS. This tutorial will be again with Cate and myself giving you examples, explanations, and how you can use these structures in your IELTS essay. In this tutorial, we're specifically going to be looking at higher-level vocabulary mainly focused around band 8 and band 9.

So, welcome to this tutorial, Cate. How are you doing?

Cate: Hi, Ben. I'm great. I am absolutely great. Hope you are, too.



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Ben: Yes. I'm doing well, thanks. All right, let's jump into it. So, we're going to look first at-- actually, before we jump into it, I'll just give a brief outline. We're going to be looking at band 8 alternative complex conditional structures. Then defining and non-defining relative clauses with relative pronouns, structures for reason, result, and purpose. I really like this one; structures for reason, result, and purpose because it's very useful for constructing your arguments especially higher-level arguments for IELTS task 2.

Then we're going to look at participle clauses and we're going to look at band 9 where we cover-- if we've got time-- inversion and some more conditional structures and then as we briefly touched on in the previous episode, verbs that change the meaning when taking gerunds or infinitive forms.

So, let's jump straight into it. Alternative complex conditional structures.

ALTERNATIVE COMPLEX CONDITIONAL STRUCTURES

Cate: Yes, I made up such a complex title for that, but I wanted it to sound different because conditionals is simple, right? We speak about the zero, one, two, three mixed conditionals. That



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is slightly let's say in the realm of band 7 more or less 8, but you know very few learners realize that conditionals is not just if clauses. It's a lot. It's much more than just if sentences.

So, for example, one of the most useful-- absolutely useful structures is using should at the beginning of the clause instead of if. For example, should you need me at any moment, make sure you call me or of course, for formal letter writing, for job applications. Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Everyone should know this sentence. Everyone should use it appropriately in their writing.

Ben: Excellent point there, excellent; extremely useful for general Task 1.

Cate: Yes

Ben: And like we mentioned with must as you said in the previous episode, in one case we can use should in the normal sense of you should do this like advice. I should go to the gym every day, but if we use it in this new form-- but if we use it in the slightly less common form, in the more formal form as Cate just mentioned at the beginning, we get more points.

I looked in the Cambridge dictionary; if we use it in the normal or most common way, it's A2 level and if we use it at the beginning of the sentence instead of if the more formal way, it's B2



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level. By the way, memorize this phrase especially if you're doing the General Task 1. If you're doing that, you need this phrase; should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact me.

I think this would also be extremely useful for IELTS writing Task 2. It will perhaps be more challenging to integrate it into an essay, but it would sound very good. Don't you think, Cate?

Cate: Yes, I do, but I'm still struggling when I think how to put it in an essay. Should this-- oh, no. Should this be an opportunity let's say in terms of I don't know energy efficiency-- I'm still in pollution and energy efficiency topic. Should this emerge as an opportunity, I am certain that the countries should not lose it. Something like this.

Ben: I was thinking then should the government implement such measures, there would undoubtedly be an increase in productivity.

Cate: Oh, yes. Yes, yes. That's much more coherent because [unintelligible 00:05:29.03]

Ben: No, I was thinking while you were talking. I had a few seconds there just to create it-- to invent one. It did take me a while though. It is challenging to think of this on the fly, so to speak.



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ALWAYS PLAN YOUR WRITING

Cate: Yes, but it's not impossible especially when you plan your writing. Every time you want to describe a condition, a situation that involves a condition, then an exam taker could think well, can I say it otherwise? Can I use another structure, but not say if because that will bring me more points in this case? And that's possible.

Ben: Absolutely.

Cate: It doesn't hurt to write a simple if sentence-- regular sentence and then when you revise think oh wait a second. I know that should thing, so I can use it.

Ben: Exactly. I just want to highlight two points there that Cate mentioned. One, when you're doing your plan, this is very, very important. When you're planning your essay, perhaps be aware of the opportunity to upgrade the sentence; instead of using if, using should.

Be careful though and make sure you're getting feedback and make sure you're doing it confidently before doing these small modifications. Be confident of your modifications because



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some modifications could end up losing you points. Then the second point; get into the habit of looking for these opportunities to upgrade your writing and increase your score.

So, let's move on to the next one.

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR, IF IT WAS, IF IT WERE NOT FOR

Cate: And the next one is... yes. If it hadn't been for or if it was or if it were not for. That's another curious way of saying that some situation is dependent on another situation or a person. Look, for example, if it had not been for the investigative journalist, the politicians would have never gone to jail. So, what does this mean? That the situation of the work of that investigative journalist directly influenced the fact that those politicians have gone to jail. So, yes.

Ben: Excellent point there and I just want to mention a side point. You can use journalist, but if you use investigative journalist, it sounds much, much-- it's topic-specific vocabulary and I think in your writing if you are talking about journalists, you can easily modify your argument to say it was an investigative journalist rather than a standard normal journalist and just pick up possibly some extra points for lexical resource for a more specific term.



So, we can move on to the next one now which is very similar, no?

Cate: Yes, it is similar in many ways and just as the previous structure that can be rephrased very simply. For example, if the investigative journalist hadn't worked or hadn't written that article, the politicians would have never gone to jail, but again, it's about the difference in structure. It's about the range.

So, here you can say something as simple as if the technology becomes available, we would be able to travel across the world in just a couple of hours, but that's simple. That is band 6.5 at best. Accuracy for band 7-- no that is band 6.5 believe me, but if we say if the technology were to become available-- were to become, which means describing imaginary future situations.

Yes, that's a conditional. That's a conditional and that's actually-- I don't even know how-- I don't want to say sophisticated because it's not sophisticated. It's just a more formal, a more academic way of writing simpler things and it's a better style and it's always a better style.

Ben: Excellent, excellent. So, just to complete that sentence: if the technology were to become available, we would be able to travel across the world in just a couple of hours. Yes, excellent point there. I remember actually I used to get this question a lot when I was a teacher. The



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students would come up to me and they'd say if I were, if I was, which one is it? And it was around the time of that Beyoncé song of *If I Were a Boy*.

Cate: *If I Were a Boy.*

Ben: Yes, that cost so many hours of tutoring time for me that song. Yes, that was a while back. Okay, moving on to the next one. Defining and non-defining relative clauses and relative pronouns. Okay, so defining a relative clause; can you explain this point for us?

DEFINING AND NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

Cate: Can you define that for me? Yes, I'm going to define defining relative clause. By the way, they also have another name. They're also called-- in other sources they're called essential and non-essential, which is actually better because a defining relative clause is one of those clauses that start with a who or which or that, but the defining relative clauses give essential information that we can identify who or what is being talked about.

For example, the gorillas which lived nearby were completely obliterated as a result of deforestation. So, which gorillas? Not just any gorillas; the ones that lived nearby. So, this little



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clause gives a bit of very important information and that information is essential. So, if defining doesn't work for you and you will remember essential, call them essential relative clauses.

What do they look like? They never have commas. If you see no commas or vice versa, if this information is vital, if without this information in this clause your sentence will be incomplete, you have yourself an essential or defining clause and you need no commas.

Ben: Okay, so just to clarify in that sentence: the gorillas which lived nearby were completely obliterated as a result of deforestation and because we have put which in there, we've made it essential for the listener. Well, it's become essential that we are talking about these specific gorillas that were living nearby. That's why it's essential because we are making these gorillas essential. We're not talking about general ones-- any gorillas. We're talking about these-- they are essential because they lived nearby and this phrase makes it absolutely explicit that they-- we're essentially talking about those, they are essential to the sentence. Okay.

Cate: But then we have the non-defining or non-essential relative clauses which look absolutely similar, but they add extra information. That's why they're also called non-essential and actually even the sentence with the gorillas can be easily made non-essential if you only put commas



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before which-- if you use which not that-- and after nearby because in that case, you'll be adding an extra detail.

I remember when I taught that, I would write the same sentence-- absolutely same sentence. There would be without the commas with defining clauses. The other one would be with commas with non-defining clauses that give additional information and I would ask students okay, what's the difference? They would say no difference. Now, believe me, there is a difference.

Ben: I see.

Cate: Yes, because when we say the gorillas which live nearby we mean namely those ones, but if we say the gorillas, which live nearby, well it doesn't really matter, but those ones too may be were completely obliterated because if you can throw out the non-defining clause and your sentence is still true and correct, that bit is a detail, right?

Ben: Yes, yes.

Cate: And that sometimes commas can make a world of difference.

Ben: Got you, yes.



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Cate: Sometimes they're just the way they are. For example, her resume, which made a big impression on the interviewers, helped her get the job. The main sentence is her resume helped her get the job.

Ben: Right.

Cate: That's the most important part. Throw away the rest, but I choose to add an additional detail. Oh, it also made a big impression on the interviewers.

Ben: Got you, got you. So, yes. It is that. It is essentially just an additional piece of information and it's non-- as you said non-essential. It's non-defining. It's just almost like a bonus piece of information.

Cate: Exactly.

Ben: I like this example: her resume helped her get the job. That's perfectly fine. Let's add some more information just to clarify. Her resume, which made a big impression on the interviewers, helped her get the job. Beautiful, beautiful, excellent.

PUNCTUATION IS NOT A SMALL THING



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Cate: That's very important because punctuation is not a small thing. A good command of punctuation sometimes can give you half-a-band score and especially a good command of defining and non-defining clauses can sometimes change the meaning of your sentence. Something up there you will lose meaning and if you are not intelligible as the writing descriptors for band score-- for bands in the writing exam say, you will lose a score.

Ben: Absolutely. Okay, so we're going to move on to the next point. Many relative clauses are introduced by a relative pronoun.

Cate: Exactly and we're used to think that relative pronouns are 1) which 2) that and maybe who and that's it, right? Well, not quite so because it can be whose like in she's a scientist whose work is world famous. It can be where: She spent many years in China, where she worked in the bank, right, because it gives additional information about the location, right? Where? Where exactly? And it can be many other things.

Well, I have examples with who and where. Sometimes it can be even when. Do I have the example with when? No, not here. I can't think of it now, but most of the W-H words might work as relative pronouns and you should be very careful and look at your sentence structure and make sure that you understand how it works.



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Ben: Excellent point and just as a side note, getting to grips with relative clauses is also a very useful skill for the speaking especially if you're doing Part 2 where we have to describe maybe a place or a person. You get the example of describe your favorite teacher at school. You can say well, my favorite teacher was Mr. Hill who was my geography teacher, for example.

As we just mentioned, relative clauses will help you with the higher band scores. So, now we're going to go into structures for reason, result, and purpose and as I mentioned before, these are very useful for your cause-and-effect essays and also useful for your speaking exam if you want to build an argument or explain a point-- not build an argument because you don't have to persuade that much in your speaking, but if you want to explain a point and just flesh it out so to speak.

So, we're going to look at conjunctions first.

WHAT ARE CONJUNCTIONS

Cate: Yes. So, many parts of speech can help build structure for reason, result, and purpose, but first of all, we're going to look at conjunctions. What are conjunctions? Conjunctions are short linking words that connect ideas and they are usually very short words. It is very easy to



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remember conjunctions if you remember the acronym FANBOYS depending on whether you know Fanboys. I think you do, right?

Ben: Yes, yes. I used to be one.

Cate: So, why FANBOYS? Because F is for for, A is for and, N is for nor, B is for but, O is for or, Y is for yet, and S is for so. So, in one acronym you remember all the conjunctions. Of course, not all of them show cause and effect, but some of them like so or so as to that's along the structure. Of course, that's not just a conjunction. They can show cause and effect. Look at this. He is ambitious so he doesn't mind staying late at work most evenings.

Ben: Yes, absolutely. I like the one so as to especially for the speaking. I know we're not talking about the speaking right now, but it's almost like a collocation as well and it just rolls--

Cate: And it is and it is.

Ben: And it like rolls off the tongue; so as to. She's decided to do an evening course in bookkeeping so as to be better able to help her brother with his new business. Yes, about the fanboys in a colloquial sense, if you're a fanboy, you're kind of obsessed. So, people who are massive fans of possibly Apple products they get called fanboys or Steve Jobs' fanboys because they will buy anything that Apple produces, for example, but this is more colloquial. So, you



don't want to be talking about fanboys in your writing exam. You better not. How would you say that in a formal way, Cate?

Cate: What do you mean?

Ben: Fanboy; you could say Apple consumers are often described as disciples of Steve Jobs.

Cate: Not disciples, no.

Ben: Disciples?

Cate: No.

Ben: You wouldn't say?

Cate: No. A disciple is a person who follows someone's teaching.

Ben: Exactly. It stretches. It's a creative use--

Cate: Avid users, avid users



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Ben: Yes, but that doesn't-- you could be an avid user of your Microsoft computer-- of your Windows computer because you don't have any alternative, but that doesn't mean you're a fanboy. If you're a fanboy, you absolutely love it as well. Anyway, we're getting--

Cate: That's off topic.

Ben: Exactly. Okay, let's go. So, what's the next point?

Cate: Yes, yes, yes, but again, just to go back a bit, by these fanboys I meant the acronym; the first letter.

Ben: Of course, of course, yes. It was me. I was throwing a spanner into the works so to speak, but it's clearly off topic. All right. Next one.

PREPOSITIONS

Cate: Then we've got prepositions that can do the same. They can they can introduce cause and I really love the prepositional expression owing to; owing to the storms. Basically, a lot of people will tend to say due to the storms, but owing to sounds a bit more complex. Another beautiful word or underestimated use of the preposition for is in the sentence the students



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couldn't sleep for worrying. Yes, we can say because they were worried, but that's so simple, right? So, again we're speaking about advanced use of prepositions.

Ben: Absolutely. I like that tip as well because it's quite easy to integrate. It's quite easy to adopt because after a preposition if we've got the verb, nine times out of ten it's going to be in the gerund form--

Cate: Yes, yes.

Ben: --which is quite easy to learn. Once again, if you can go through your writing and look for opportunities to upgrade-- and by the way, this skill of upgrading vocabulary, upgrading structures, it's a skill you want to get totally under control before you start implementing it in your exam. You want to be upgrading with confidence not sort of like gambling on the upgrade that you implement.

So, the next point: the following verbs introduce cause. I like this one, too.

THE FOLLOWING VERBS INTRODUCE CAUSE



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Cate: Yes, these are also very useful in essay writing. For example, you can say that someone's attitude stems from their background, right? Comes from it, is caused by it, originates there, but stems from sounds really good or of course, the structure is based on and there are many, many other structures and verbs that show cause origin effect and they should be used not only there because a lot of people just overuse the words cause, effect, and because, at best the two, but there are many, many other ways of saying that.

Ben: Yes. I like stems from because it's similar to owing to in that you don't hear it that often from a native English speaker point of view. Looking at essays, you hardly ever see it. So, if an examiner sees this, it's definitely going to attract attention and I think it would definitely impress the examiner because using uncommon structures or a unique language definitely helps.

So, moving on to the next one: participle clauses.

PARTICIPLE CLAUSES

Cate: Yes. Participle clauses. Well, we will move on in a second to participle clauses because we really have to explain what is a participle, but we have all heard sentences that start with



something looking like a gerund, but it's not a gerund. Having done extensive market research, the company was confident its new product would succeed.

So, you can easily rephrase this sentence and make it simpler and say that due to the fact that the company has done extensive market research they were confident that its new product would succeed, but that's a simpler way of saying it. If you just start your sentence with a clause that has a participle having done in the beginning, it also shows cause-effect.

Ben: Yes, good point, very good point.

Cate: It's less obvious cause-effect connection, but that's the beauty of it because sometimes the best complex structures don't have to be obvious. It's like creating cohesion without cohesive devices and that's really appreciated and highly assessed by bands 8 or 9 because a lot of exam takers they think that if they throw a bunch of cohesive devices, they're going to get band 9 while sentences like this will get them band 8 or 9.

Ben: I like that. We will have to do-- in the future, we'll have to do a tutorial about creating cohesion without cohesive devices. Absolutely and it's one of these higher-level skills as you as you just mentioned and it's similar to writing in a style that clearly shows your argument without explicitly stating your position.



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Just through your style of writing, it's clear that you've taken this position although you haven't explicitly stated that's your position and this is the higher level of writing skills. So, yes, I'm very glad you mentioned that. Okay, so I guess we can move on to using certain nouns to express cause and effect.

Cate: Yes. I think that's the easiest way to express cause and effect. I'm not sure why I put it here, but it's still a grammatical-- it's still a method to show cause and effect or result or reason. However, this is the lexical-- the vocabulary way of saying the same things that were said grammatically in the previous structures. So, you can say the aim of the program or you can say this is the reason why and I'm just giving the structures, not the context. Well, of course, the sentence was the aim of the program was to give students work experience.

Yes, there are many ways to rephrase that sentence. Other possible nouns that can refer to the same cause and effect are: result, reason, purpose, outcome, basis, motive, consequence, and aim of course that we have here.

Ben: Absolutely and just to rewind, a few minutes back we said having done and you mentioned due to the fact, yes? I think although due to the fact is possibly especially with upper level students it could be interpreted as maybe a little bit trite as in it's kind of overused, but with certain students especially maybe the student who's at 6.5 using a collocation like that;



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due to the fact of the market research or due to the fact of the extensive market research, the company was confident that its new product would succeed.

Sometimes these collocations although they may sound a bit clumsy or a bit wordy, they are useful if you are struggling to reach a band 7 because what you've done there is you've got maybe 30% or 40% of the sentence grammatically perfect just by using this collocation and all of these things they just add up. I think the error when we're using these almost quick-fix collocations or these quick fixes is if we overuse them. So, this is why if we can also use phrases such as having done, then we're not only going to pick up points for using the collocation or having a fragment of the sentence grammatically perfect. We're definitely going to avoid losing points because of that fragment, but also using having done, we're going to improve the range of structures that the examiner sees.

Cate: Yes.

Ben: Okay. So, that brings us on to the next point of participle clauses.

PARTICIPLE CLAUSES



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Cate: Yes. Well, first of all, I guess I will have to explain what is a participle and how is it different from gerund. So, a participle is defined as a form of a verb. So, it comes from a verb, right, that is used to modify a noun or a noun phrase or a verb and basically it works like an adjective or an adverb.

So, participle is a verbal something that looks like a gerund, but is not a gerund. It works more like an adverb or an adjective. It describes. It describes either a thing or an action. That's why it's either adjectival or adverbial. So, for example, let's look at the sentence: The problem being discussed the most now is the newly emerged virus in Asia.

We can actually expand the sentence slightly and make it more descriptive and we will make use of relative pronouns that we discussed a couple of minutes ago. The problem which is being discussed, right? You add one little relative pronoun and you realize that which is being discussed describes what? The problem. That's it. This is how works as an adjective. It describes the noun, the center, the topic of the whole sentence.

Ben: I see. The problem which is being-- we can say the problem being discussed the most now is the newly emerged virus in Asia or the problem which is being discussed the most now is the newly emerged virus in Asia. Excellent.



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Okay and just to go off on a different point here, sometimes if we want to be a little bit more--well, say the same or slightly similar, but with less words to make our essay a little bit more concise, sometimes I would edit out which is, but the problem is with IELTS writing is that if we do edit that which is, we're going to lose points for a relative clause.

So, it all comes back to finding a balance of not overusing these relative clauses, but also still striving for conciseness. So, it's a balance between writing a succinct essay, but also including these grammar structures that are going to help you pick up points.

Cate: Yes, if you have five relative clauses--

Ben: It's horrible.

Cate: It's very tedious.

Ben: It's horrible.

Cate: Yes, if you drop a couple of relative pronouns when you can drop them because if you delve deeper into the topic of relative clauses, you will learn-- I mean you as an as a learner--you will learn that not all relative pronouns can be dropped.



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Ben: Yes, this is true.

Cate: We're not going to go there now. So, not everything can be downgraded to a participle clause, but anyway...

Ben: This is true, yes, this is true. As I just said, it's finding a balance and knowing when to do it and when not to do it and when not to use them. All right. So, next point, Cate.

Cate: Yes. So, these participle clauses can also describe states or actions and they can work as adverbs if you know what an adverb is. So, an adverb describes an action-- modifies a verb or a verbal phrase. So, look at the sentence: Feeling exhausted after long hours of cramming, students-- why don't I have an article there?

Ben: It depends on the content, doesn't it?

Cate: Yes, the students are unable to have-- students in general. Yes, I know why I wrote it like this. Students are unable to have a job at all. So, due to the fact that they feel exhausted after long hours, right? So, yes. We have this invisible due to the fact. We have this invisible cause-effect situation in this sentence and again, this is two in one. You're building a



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cause-effect structure using participle clauses. You're collecting all these beautiful points for range and accuracy, of course, if you have the accuracy.

Ben: Excellent point there and again, it's like what we were saying before; due to the fact. We can put it there due to the fact of feeling exhausted, but it's kind of surplus to requirement because it's clearly inferred. By just using feeling exhausted, it's inferred that that was the reason. After long hours of cramming, students are unable to have a job at all.

Cate: You can also rephrase it: As they feel exhausted after long hours of cramming and it's not going to be a participle clause at all. It's going to become a subject; a proper subject clause, but again, that's another alternative. It's not that it's wrong or it's worse or better. It's just another one because you can't write participle clauses all the time and you can't write just subject clauses all the time-- I mean full sentence full clauses.

Ben: Got you, yes, and I think again, just going back to what we mentioned before; range. We need to include a wide variety of different structures and this is true not only for your IELTS exam, but good writing that's easy to read is going to include a lot of different structures. Otherwise, it's going to get too, too repetitive and too boring.

Cate: Yes.



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Ben: All right. Next point: perfect participle-- oh, go on, sorry .

PERFECT PARTICIPLE CLAUSES

Cate: Yes, perfect participle clauses they also work like these descriptive adverbial structures for states or actions, but they also show when or why something happened. That's why they modify the action. Look at this sentence: Having made their decision, it was not possible to change their mind. So, in a way, we can rephrase when they have made or once they have made their decision, it was not possible to change their mind.

So, perfect clauses are these having made. We don't say making their decision; we say having made. Any perfect structure refers to the past. That's a very easy hint. So, this refers to when this action was completed in the past. Once it was made-- it was made. Again, I'm just putting it in a different tense to show that it's done. It's over in the past. So, yes, this is how it works.

Ben: Super, super. Okay. Well, I think we've reached the time limit for today's tutorial. Do you agree, Cate?

Cate: Yes, I do.



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Ben: All right. So, yes, what we're going to do in the next tutorial is we're going to cover band 9 structures and as we said before just to clarify, it's not a case of use this structure and we guarantee you a 9. It's that this level of structures will help you because they are higher level. High level students; we're talking C1 C2 will use these structures and they're more likely to get a band 9, but we're going to be covering inversion, more advanced conditional structures, and then verbs that change their meaning when taking gerunds or infinitives and that would finish our series of essential grammar for IELTS.

So, thank you very much, Cate. Do you have anything to add before we finish?

IT'S IMPORTANT TO PLAN YOUR STUDY

Cate: No. I think again, similar to the previous podcast, I would say plan your study. Take it one step at a time because the more you get into these sophisticated topics, the more you think that they're so difficult like these participle clauses. Believe me, this topic is huge, but it's so easy once you start practicing.



Look at that example. Write two sentences of your own about your own reality. Then write a sentence that you think you could use in an essay and think oh, look at that. I can use a perfect participle clause. So, yes. Make it your own.

Ben: Absolutely. I totally agree with what Cate said there and also of breaking it down into small parts. This is a very useful tip because as Cate mentioned, it can get overwhelming and if we break it down into the smallest part and work on conquering part by part or bit by bit and also just as Cate just mentioned, relative clauses is a very large extensive topic.

I would break it down and find a few center structures that reflect a certain rule and then learn those structures inside out and start playing with those structures for that specific rule and then move on to the next rule and start learning structures for those rules-- regarding those rules. I think this way, it's a very practical way of learning them.

Also, when you do learn them, remember to start using them in your essays. Don't force them. Look for the opportunities where they will sound natural. Also, just to be certain you're using them correctly, it's also advisable to get feedback on these. Get feedback and this way you're going to improve faster.



So, that's everything from Cate and myself today. Remember you're not alone when it comes to IELTS. You've got us here to help you. We can give you feedback on your essay. We can help you if you just send us an email. Remember to get on the email list. We've got lots of offers and lots more advice there through the email newsletter and if you know anybody who's studying and struggling with the IELTS, tell them to get in contact with us as well and share the podcast. That's it from Cate and myself. Have a fantastic day and all the best with your IELTS preparation.

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Female Voice: Thanks for listening to ieltpodcast.com